

STOMPING MAX BOOT ■ IRAN'S PEACE OFFERING ■ GOODBYE NEW DEMS

MARCH 12, 2007

# The American Conservative

“WHY CAN'T  
**BUSH**  
BE MORE LIKE  
**BAUER?**”

*The Neocon Cult  
Around **24***



## Weyrich and Lind Answer Their Critics

We appreciate the thoughtful responses James P. Pinkerton, John Derbyshire, and David Franke offered to our manifesto, "The Next Conservatism" (Feb. 12). But we would like to refute one theme common to them all: namely, "you can't go back."

Pinkerton writes, "Either you go forward, or you go backward. You can't do both. And more to the point, going backward isn't truly an option. ... true conservatives should realize that Americans don't want retroculture ..." Derbyshire says, "I am sorry to tell them, though, that 1957 is past and gone and will not come back. ... The business of conservatism is not to 'recover the America we knew as recently as the 1950s...'." Franke puts it thus:

I suspect most Americans my age would, at first impulse, wax nostalgic about 'the good old days' but in the end would choose to live in today's society. ... while society is in constant change, it rarely, if ever, makes a U-turn to an idealized past. ... Given freedom, very few people choose to return to an earlier lifestyle.

Until recently, all three commentators would have been right. American culture was future-focused. Virtually all Americans believed that the present was better than the past, and the future would be better than the present. It could be said this tenet was the basis of American civic faith and a necessary part of our centuries-old appeal to immigrants. Regardless of where our ancestors came from, or when, they expected that their lives and the lives of their children would get better because life in America steadily got better.

More broadly, a (sometimes blind) faith in the future and in progress, and a frequently counter-factual dismissal of the past, especially the Middle Ages, are

central characteristics of the Modern Age. The prototypical Modern Man is Faust. He must move ever onward; he cannot tarry, much less turn back. That is the bargain Modernity made with ... well, we all know with whom Faust made his bargain with, don't we?

### Retrocultural Appeal

But recently, Americans seem to be on to something old. We beg leave to offer, in the midst of all this philosophical conjuring, some empirical data. In January 1992, our organization, the Free Congress Foundation, sponsored a nationwide survey of 1,000 registered voters, conducted by Lawrence Research, on Americans' attitudes toward the past. The purpose of the survey was to see if there might be a basis in public opinion for retroculture, a theme we were beginning to explore. The results came as something of a surprise.

A majority (74 percent) said that in the past, our economy, our moral values, our environment, our community and family life, our pace of life, the quality of services, and the quality of our workmanship were better than today. A plurality (43 percent) thought our culture was better in the past. Only 25 percent found today's culture preferable.

Forty-seven percent of respondents thought their grandparents were happier than they; 29 percent believed their grandparents were not as happy.

While a majority thought life before World War II (up through the 1920s) was worse than life today, 61 percent said that life in the 1950s was better; only 20 percent said life in the '50s was worse than it is now.

We asked, "If you could choose the time and place where you would live, which one of these six alternatives would be your first choice?" A majority (58 percent) said, "A typical suburb in 1950." The contemporary alternative, Los Angeles in 1991, was chosen by only 6 percent. When asked for their second

choice, a plurality (32 percent) chose a small town in 1900.

Fifty-six percent of respondents said they had a generally favorable impression of the Victorian period, which the survey defined as the years 1870-1900; 30 percent said they had an unfavorable impression.

In a striking turn from Americans' traditional optimism, 48 percent thought life in the future would generally get worse. Forty-seven percent said it would get better, and 5 percent had no opinion.

### Key Questions

Then came the two questions we considered of central importance for retroculture. We reproduce them here:

Do you see any signs today of people and things turning back toward the past? If yes, do you feel this is a good thing or a bad thing?

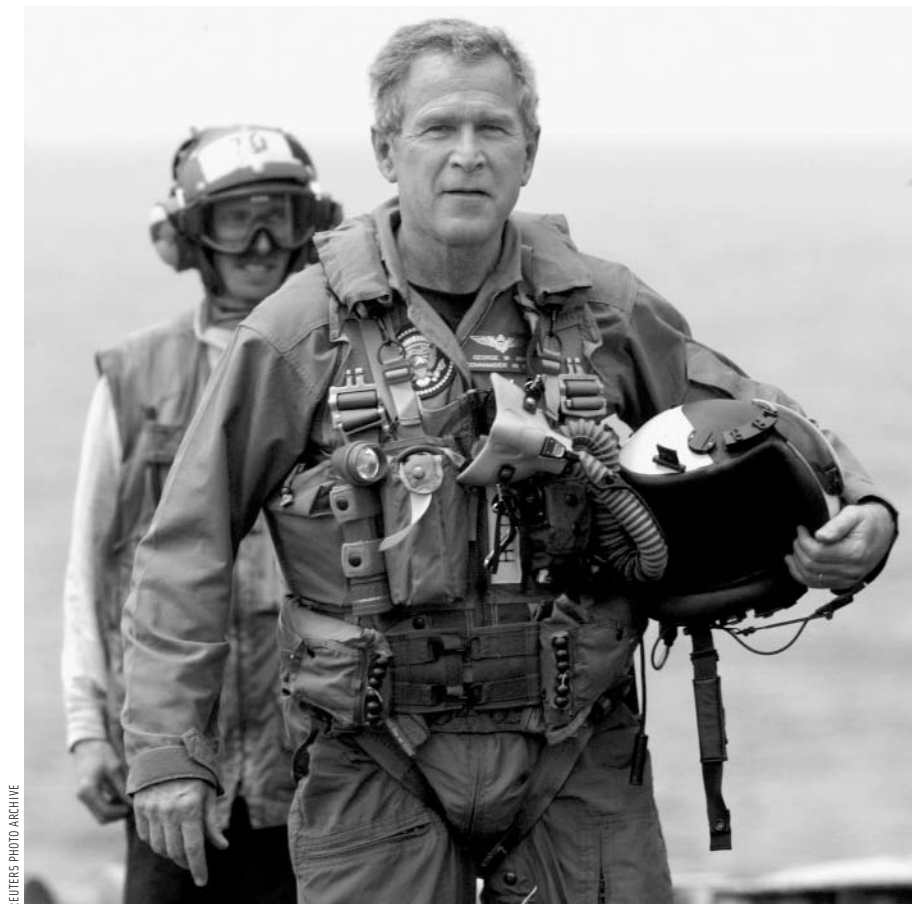
Yes/Good thing	45%
Yes/Bad thing	7%
No	45%
No opinion	3%

Do you feel the country's political leaders should or should not be trying to lead the nation back toward the way we used to be? If yes, do you feel they are trying to do that?

Should/Trying to do that	14%
Should/ Not trying to do that	35%
Should/(No opinion)	10%
Should not	42%

The second question speaks most directly to whether or not the next conservatism should include the retroculture theme. It ties retroculture directly in with politics. Fifty-nine percent of those polled said that our political leaders, and by implication a political program, should try to lead the country back toward the way we used to be.

*Continued on Page 34*



REUTERS PHOTO ARCHIVE

[COVER]

## What Would Jack Bauer Do?

BY MICHAEL BRENDAN DOUGHERTY Fox's hit drama normalizes torture, magnifies terror, and leaves conservatives asking why George W. Bush can't be more like *24*'s hero. **Page 8**

[IDEAS]

## Bloggers vs. the Lobby

BY SCOTT MCCONNELL Charging foreign-policy dissenters with anti-Semitism no longer shuts down debate. **Page 11**

[POLITICS]

## Middle Men

BY W. JAMES ANTLE III Democratic centrists struggle to stay relevant as the blue base rewards those more interested in confronting Republicans than compromising with them. **Page 15**

### COLUMNS

**7 Patrick J. Buchanan:** Happy Birthday, Mr. President

**35 Taki:** Andy Warhol, Plastic Virtuoso

### NEWS & VIEWS

**4 Fourteen Days:** Rove Junior Doesn't Do Windows; Prisoners of War Wounds; The Anna Nicole Show

**6 Editorial:** Iran's Peace Offering

**13 Deep Background:** Warmongers Disappointed by NK Diplomacy; Cheney Derails Israel-Syria Talks

### ARTICLES

**17 Daniel McCarthy:** Ralph de Toledano, Nonconformist Conservative

**19 Jeffrey Hart:** Tennis Courtliness

**22 Christopher Preble:** How Many Policemen Does the World Need?

**24 Philip Giraldi:** Faith-Based Intelligence

### ARTS & LETTERS

**26 Steve Sailer:** "The Lives of Others" may be the best movie of 2006.

**27 Daniel McCarthy:** *Radicals for Capitalism: A Freewheeling History of the Modern American Libertarian Movement* by Brian Doherty

**29 Martin Sieff:** *War Made New: War, Technology, and the Course of History: 1500 to Today* by Max Boot

**32 Wayne Merry:** *Overblown: How Politicians and the Terrorism Industry Inflate National Security Threats, and Why We Believe Them* by John Mueller



[WHITE HOUSE]

## MASTER & COMMANDER

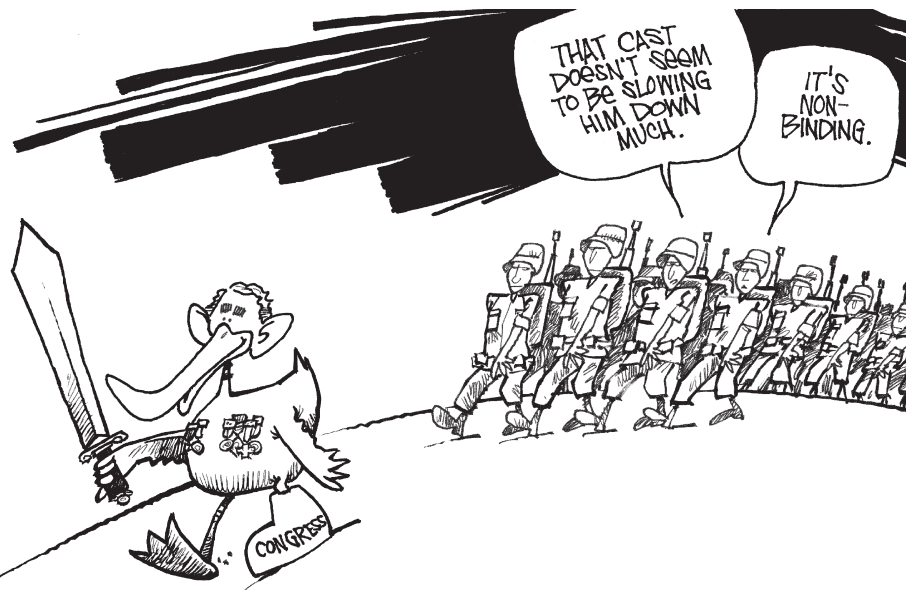
President Bush puzzled many with his latest press conference: a mixture of odd formulations and growing defiance. This time “Quds,” a reference to an Iranian military unit, replaced “realism” as the word the president was determined to push into the atmosphere. One journalist counted 18 uses of “I believe” or “I firmly believe,” catchphrase of the faith-based foreign policy. There was the curious third-person invocation of Bush’s favorite title—“provoking Iran is just a wrong way to characterize the commander in chief’s decision ...” Then the steady stream of “I” statements, regal yet isolated—“I know,” “I told,” “I ordered.” For punctuation, the typical snickering and smirking at inappropriate moments. The president is known for this tic, but it seems to be getting more pronounced.

Finally, the overheated language so redolent of Lyndon Johnson’s efforts to justify our failed war in Vietnam: “If we fail there, the enemy will follow us here. I firmly believe that. That’s one of the main reasons I made the decision I made.” One blogger noted that the language of desperation never changes, nor does the nature of the deception, be it “dominoes” or “caliphates.” In Vietnam, at least there was an overriding reality—the strategic competition with the Soviet Union that tended to focus the White House and Pentagon’s attention. Now there is just the single American superpower, weakening itself more every day, and narrating its decline from the presidential podium.

[IMMIGRATION]

## JOBS JUNIOR WON’T DO

Explaining the administration’s immigration plan to a Republican women’s luncheon, White House advisor Karl Rove added a personal note: “I don’t want my 17-year-old son to have to pick



tomatoes or make beds in Las Vegas.” What exactly was so terrible about tough work, he didn’t explain. And these aren’t the only jobs Karl Rove doesn’t want his boy doing. Last June he told a business group in Georgia, “I don’t want my kid digging ditches. I don’t want my kid slinging tar. But I know somebody’s got to do it.”

What some in the media called “the gaffe of the year,” White House Deputy Press Secretary Dana Perino defended, saying that every parent wants their child to have a high-skilled, high-wage job. That may be the long-term hope of most parents, but it’s not what they expect from their teenagers. Earning an honest wage “by the sweat of thy brow” was exactly the sort of character-building parents once encouraged. Manual labor taught many sons of privilege the dignity of work and the value of a dollar.

But Rove’s comment reveals an elite mentality far removed from the Yankee work ethic. Menial jobs are fit only for second-class non-citizens. If he thinks so little of the work, what can he think of the people who do it?

[WAR]

## DERELICTION OF DUTY

Many readers of the *Washington Post* were heartbroken by the two-part series about wounded soldiers at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. The doctors there perform miracles every day, keeping the badly wounded alive and getting some of them back to the mainstream of life. President Bush and other administration officials have made well-publicized visits to Ward 57, the hospital’s state-of-the-art amputee unit.

But politicians don’t visit Building 18. The old lodge, with its moldy walls and thriving rodent population, is home to the tough cases: maimed soldiers not well enough to return home or caught in bureaucratic limbo. Some 700—17 times the number hospitalized at Walter Reed’s pristine main facility—are parked in that building and dozens of surrounding hotels and apartments. Their average stay: 10 months. Some have languished for more than two years.

The *Post* describes the daily lives of these warehoused men: “The wounded manage other wounded. Soldiers dealing with psychological disorders of their

own have been put in charge of others at the risk of suicide. Disengaged clerks, unqualified platoon sergeants and over-worked case managers fumble with simple needs ...” The United States has suffered losses far beyond the 3,000 plus killed in the Iraq adventure.

Five miles up the road, the people who falsified intelligence to goad Washington into war are feted at White House functions. Some receive presidential medals, others enjoy promotions to fancy posts at the World Bank and highly paid sinecures at the National Defense University. Meanwhile, the soldiers they sent into battle sit in squalid buildings—damaged, impoverished, and safely hidden from public view.

[CULTURE]

## DON'T ANALYZE THIS

We admit it: we followed the coverage of Anna Nicole Smith's death. And we don't apologize. Those serious commentators who can't admit to consuming cultural junk food had to attach a sociological text to justify their fascination. The *Washington Post's* Phillip Kennicott was typical: “she ... had gotten under our skin, and taken on a role we didn't quite realize was so big in the history of marriage, money and sex.” The same experts who lamented the frivolity of Smith's life and the mediocrity of her career occupied hours of airtime dissecting her final days. But we felt no compunction to assign meaning as we watched the fairy tale unwind. A pretty girl died.

There may be some parable in her descent from billboard fame to reality-show notoriety. But more than being a comment on “the history of marriage, money and sex,” Anna Nicole provided a diversion. Sauntering down red carpets, cartoon blonde and barely contained, beneath all the froth, she was small-town Vickie Lynn Hogan playing dress up. We didn't watch because that meant something. Just the opposite:

entertainment offers a refuge because it is so very trivial. Demanding significance from Anna Nicole's death thus requires something she never asked of her life. That is a personal tragedy, but scarcely the morality tale of pundits' imagination.

[CONGRESS]

## WAR PARTY

Ric Keller is the sort of Republican the Right used to love—pro-life, anti-tax, 97 percent lifetime ACU rating. Now, with a single vote against escalation of the Iraq War, he has become a traitor.

Keller knew that the vote would be unpopular, admitting “angst” as he spoke on the House floor. Back in 2002, he voted the authorize the war—“I did not want Saddam Hussein to give weapons of mass destruction to al-Qaeda.” But with the tyrant dead, no weapons found, and the country splitting apart at America's expense, Keller believes that “Interjecting more young American troops into the cross hairs of an Iraqi civil war is simply not the right approach.” That principled stand may cost him his job.

Keller is the target of a new advocacy group, the Victory Caucus—motto: “We support leaders who support victory”—which is now angling to unseat him. “The Iraq issue transcends partisan politics,” Dean Barnett of the Caucus's Board of Governors told *The Politico*. “Keller may be a rock-ribbed conservative but on the biggest issue of our day, he's got it wrong.” Radio personality Hugh Hewitt has joined in, using his program to recruit primary challengers.

Keller isn't the only Republican to oppose Bush's surge: 16 other GOP congressmen joined him. Most are in safe seats, so the Victory Caucus's campaign may have little practical effect. More troubling is the political future of a party that chooses to define itself solely by commitment to a failing war. ■

# The American Conservative

Founding Editor  
**Taki Theodoracopoulos**

Editor and Publisher  
**Scott McConnell**

Executive Editor  
**Kara Hopkins**

Assistant Editors  
**Michael Brendan Dougherty**  
**Alexander Konetzki**

Film Critic  
**Steve Sailer**

Contributing Editors

**W. James Antle III, Andrew J. Bacevich, Doug Bandow, James Bovard, Richard Cummings, Michael Desch, Philip Giraldi, Paul Gottfried, Leon Hadar, Peter Hitchens, Christopher Layne, Eric S. Margolis, Daniel McCarthy, James P. Pinkerton, Justin Raimondo, Fred Reed, R.J. Stove, Thomas E. Woods Jr., John Zmirak**

Art Director  
**Mark Graef**

Associate Publisher  
**Jon Basil Utley**

Publishing Consultant  
**Ronald E. Burr**

Office Manager  
**Petra Blondiaux**

Copy Assistant  
**John W. Greene**

Editor Emeritus  
**Patrick J. Buchanan**

*The American Conservative*, Vol. 6, No. 5, March 12, 2007 (ISSN 1540-966X). Reg. U.S. Pat. & Tm. Off. TAC is published 24 times per year, biweekly (except for January and August) for \$49.97 per year by The American Conservative, LLC, 1300 Wilson Blvd., Suite 120, Arlington, VA, 22209. Periodicals postage paid at Arlington, VA, and additional mailing offices. Printed in the United States of America. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The American Conservative*, P.O. Box 9030, Maple Shade, NJ 08052-9030.

Subscription rates: \$49.97 per year (24 issues) in the U.S., \$54.97 in Canada (U.S. funds), and \$69.97 other foreign (U.S. funds). Back issues: \$6.00 (prepaid) per copy in USA, \$7.00 in Canada (U.S. funds).

**For subscription orders, payments, and other subscription inquiries—**

By phone: **800-579-6148**  
(outside the U.S./Canada 856-380-4131)

Via Web: [www.amconmag.com](http://www.amconmag.com)

By mail: *The American Conservative*, P.O. Box 9030, Maple Shade, NJ 08052-9030

When ordering a subscription please allow 4–6 weeks for delivery of your first issue.

Inquiries and letters to the editor should be sent to [letters@amconmag.com](mailto:letters@amconmag.com). For advertising sales or editorial call 703-875-7600.

This issue went to press on February 22, 2007.  
Copyright 2007 *The American Conservative*.

# The Road Not Taken

As Beltway factions outdo themselves to portray Iran as a Mideast crazy state or the new Nazi Germany, it helps to examine some actual facts of the relationship. Tehran's May 2003 attempt to open a negotiation channel with Washington—the details are

only now coming to light—will be of intense interest to future generations if President Bush eventually ignites a war with Iran. For the moment, that overture stands as an example of what was on the table in 2003 and may still be possible today, though under less favorable circumstances.

The unsigned document of about 400 words was sent, along with a cover letter to the Bush administration, through Switzerland's ambassador to Iran, Tim Guldemann. (The New America Foundation circulated a copy of the two documents at one of its conferences earlier this month.) Guldemann asserted that the proposal had been reviewed and approved by Iran's top religious leader, Sayyid Ali Khamenei, as well as by then President Mohammad Khatami and Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi. According to Guldemann, it signified a genuine effort by Iran to break the impasse with Washington.

Entitled "Roadmap," the Persian document is divided into three parts, essentially agenda items: Washington's supposed aims, Tehran's aims, and diplomatic steps to achieve them.

In the initial section, Iran acknowledged that the U.S. could be expected to seek complete Iranian adherence to International Atomic Energy protocols and full transparency to ensure that there were no efforts to build or possess weapons of mass destruction. Iran further anticipated that the U.S. would want decisive help in mopping up al-Qaeda, a lessening of Iranian support for Palestinian opposition groups, pressure to stop violence against Israel within the 1967 borders, a demilitarization of Hezbollah, and acceptance of the "two states approach" for Israel and Palestine.

From Washington, Iran would seek an end of efforts to overthrow the Islamic Republic and change the Iranian political system, lifting of sanctions, an unblocking of Iranian efforts to gain entry into the WTO, no Turkish invasion of North Iraq, action against the MEK (a left-wing anti-Islamic Republic group on the State Department's terrorism list), peaceful access to nuclear technology, and "recognition of Iran's legitimate security interests in the region."

Without pre-judging how negotiations might proceed, these agenda items seem eminently rational. If agreement could have been reached, there would have been no Iranian "bomb" on the horizon, no war between Hezbollah and Israel, and a

much more pacified Iraq—potentially leaving America with far fewer casualties than its troops have suffered. It is possible, even likely, that Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, the Iranian president who dabbles in Holocaust denial and is now losing support, would never have been elected president in 2005.

We don't know whether the Bush administration's failure to pursue the initiative was due to pure incompetence or more malign reasons. Condoleezza Rice now claims that she "doesn't remember ever seeing such a thing"—a claim disputed by former top National Security Council and State Department officials. Others suggest that Colin Powell felt he couldn't overcome Dick Cheney's influence and get the president to respond positively. Of course, in an administration so taken with war—then in the midst of its "Mission Accomplished" victory lap—there was virtually no constituency for sitting down and talking with folks they had labeled "evil."

The circumstances are less favorable now: Iran has begun to master the nuclear enrichment process, and moderates in the government have lost ground. Nevertheless, the basic outlines of a successful negotiation with Iran remain. It is an established state with tangible interests to protect and a long history of moderate international behavior (interspersed with distinctly immoderate rhetoric). It has concrete things to offer the United States. At the time its missive was sent, Iran was clearly willing to recognize Israel and to co-operate in lowering the temperature in the region. There is no reason not to explore whether it is still interested in such things.

Former National Security Council aide Flynt Leverett has likened the Iranian initiative to the Chinese overture, sent through Pakistan, at the height of the Vietnam War. This resulted in Henry Kissinger's secret trip to China, ping-pong diplomacy, and a summit between Nixon and Mao that dramatically improved America's strategic position. At the time, China had been giving military aid to the Vietcong and thus helping to kill U.S. troops, just as it is claimed that Iranian weapons are helping to kill Americans in Iraq today. That fact did not deter Nixon from exploring the possibility of diplomacy and weighing whether its pursuit might serve America's interests. We doubt the present administration can muster the same hard-headed realism. But we'd love to be proven wrong. —The Editors

# GW and George W.

On that day we now celebrate as Presidents Day, our 43rd president took Marine One down to Mount Vernon to pay homage to our first president. Excellent idea.

It's time we junked Presidents Day and restored the Father of our Country to his rightful place of honor as "first in the hearts of his countrymen" by restoring Washington's Birthday. Progress is being made. The morning Bush choppered down the Potomac, the *Washington Post* came out for replacing Presidents Day—with Washington-Lincoln Day.

Well, we are halfway there. While Washington remains the least divisive great American, Lincoln—undeniably a giant—yet remains among the most controversial. Even the *Post* concedes that Father Abraham "perhaps ... exceeded the limits of presidential power."

Lincoln became a virtual dictator; suspended *habeas corpus*; locked up editors; sought to arrest the chief justice; unleashed Sherman and Sheridan to ravage Georgia, South Carolina, and the Shenandoah, taking war beyond the set bounds of civilized nations. The curse of slavery was lifted from the land, but Lincoln did not fight the war to end slavery. In his First Inaugural, to appease the seceding states, he endorsed a 13th Amendment to make slavery permanent and offered federal assistance in running down fugitive slaves.

In the Washington, D.C. in which this writer was raised, Lincoln's birthday was separate and celebrated Feb. 12, but not on the south side of the river. There they had Lee-Jackson Day.

Simple restoration of the national holiday to honor the greatest and most unifying figure in our history, George Washington, is surely a matter on which even this polarized nation can agree. And if

the *Post* wants a joint holiday, why not twin Lincoln's Birthday with that of Dr. King, and call it King Lincoln Day?

In his tribute to "the first George W.," Mr. Bush, however, did slip in a passage that rang hollow, seeking to conscript the great man in a cause from which he would have recoiled: this war in Iraq.

"And as we work to advance the cause of freedom around the world, we remember the father of our country believed that the freedoms we secured in our revolution were not meant for Americans alone. He once wrote, 'My best wishes are irresistibly excited whenever in any country I see an oppressed nation unfurl the banners of freedom.'"

As President Bush surely knows, the quote his writers dug up for him less represents the beliefs of the Father of our Country than his Farewell Address, the greatest state paper in American history. In that address, issued in September 1796, Washington laid down the principles the Republic would follow for more than a century in its conduct of foreign affairs.

"Observe good faith and justice toward all nations. Cultivate peace and harmony with all," wrote Washington. He warned against "inveterate antipathies against particular nations, and passionate attachments for others." Such antipathies and attachments, he said, must invariably produce "frequent collisions, obstinate, envenomed, and bloody contests."

Moreover, any "passionate attachment of one nation for another produces a variety of evils. ... and infusing into one the enmities of the other, betrays the former into participation in the

quarrels and wars of the latter. ... The great rule of conduct for us, in regard to foreign nations, is ... to have with them as little political connection as possible."

What the Middle East is today, a pit of war and intrigue, Europe was in his day. Washington's counsel: "Why quit our own to stand on foreign ground? Why ... entangle our peace and prosperity in the toils of European ambition, rivalry, interest, humor or caprice? ... It is our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world..." Washington rejoiced in 1778 when Congress effected America's alliance with the France of Louis XVI. For it almost assured victory for the Revolution. Washington argued that, while we should avoid permanent alliances, "we may safely trust to temporary alliances for extraordinary emergencies."

The Cold War was such an extraordinary emergency. When it ended, we should have followed Washington's example and counsel: dissolving NATO, pulling up the tripwires Acheson and Dulles put down from the Elbe to the DMZ, and bringing the troops home. Had we done so, America would not be in the hellish mess she is in today, and there might have been no 9/11.

We did not. We deposed Noriega in Panama, drove Iraq out of Kuwait, intervened in Somalia, invaded Haiti, bombed Serbia, occupied Kosovo, invaded Afghanistan, and went to war against Iraq.

And are we a happier, more united, more secure nation than when the Red Army went home? President Bush should tell his speechwriters: end the scavenger hunt for neocon quotes from great presidents. Send over a copy of the Farewell Address.

And let's make it Washington's Birthday again. ■



[all terror, all the time]

# What Would Jack Bauer Do?

Fox's hit drama normalizes torture, magnifies terror, and leaves conservatives asking why George W. Bush can't be more like *24*'s hero.

By Michael Brendan Dougherty

AGENT JACK BAUER has tortured his own brother, used household appliances to electrocute a terror suspect, staged the execution of a child, and even shot a man's wife to get information from him. On any given day, he will disarm suitcase nukes and presidential assassins. The orders of superior officers at the Counter Terrorist Unit don't deter him, the rule of law and even the threat of death do not diminish Bauer's iron will to defend America.

But this hero isn't real. He lives for one suspense-filled hour each week on Fox's cult series *24*.

It's not just Bauer's over-the-top methods that keep audiences gripping their barcaloungers, it's also the show's novel format, which relies on "real-time" storytelling. Each episode reveals the events of one hour; each season adds up to one frenetic day. The common thread is terrorism—that constant existential threat demanding self-sacrifice and frequent disregard for the polite rules of procedure and diplomacy. It's Us or Them.

In a gentler time, conservatives would have deplored this gory primetime fare. But now, finding a worldview consonant with their hawkish tendencies, they have embraced Jack Bauer as their pop-culture icon, his name uttered as an invocation of the grit and guts needed in the Age of Terror.

Now in its sixth season, *24* claims ever more critical and commercial success. Nominated for 12 Emmys in 2006, it won four, including awards for Outstanding Drama Series and Outstanding Lead Actor for Keifer Sutherland's Jack Bauer. The latest season premiere drew nearly 16 million viewers, its largest audience ever.

For those unfamiliar with the pace and tone of the show, an example: in one story arc, Jack Bauer, retired from counterterrorism and still grieving the loss of his wife, is brought back into the CTU by a personal phone call from the president. Based on information obtained through torture under the rules of rendition in South Korea, the commander in chief begs the old soldier to save Los Angeles from an imminent threat. Within an hour Bauer suits up, shoots a witness, demeans his boss's unwillingness to "get his hands dirty," and just before a commercial break grabs a dead man's fleshy neck and announces, "I'm gonna need a hacksaw." Using the severed head to infiltrate a domestic right-wing terror group, he participates in the deaths of 30 co-workers and shoots a half dozen bad guys (and their pitbull) to obtain information about an impending nuclear attack. All this before lunch.

Producers Joel Surnow and Robert Cochran originally conceived *24* as a

way to shake up the police procedural genre by replacing violent crime with terrorism and compressing the drama with their real-time gimmick. It was a shot in the dark. Sutherland told *Interview* magazine that he didn't believe the show would get picked up, owing to its unusual structure and multilayered plotting. But during production, before the show aired, the perennial topic of *24* was seared into America's consciousness. The first season debuted just eight weeks after 9/11, initially attracting a small but passionate audience and then emerging as a cultural phenomenon, inspiring slick references on ESPN and humor websites celebrating the cartoonish antics of the protagonist: "Jack Bauer has been to Mars. That's why there's no life on Mars."

Even though *24* has millions of hardcore fans, conservative opinion makers have distinguished themselves among fervent devotees of the show. Bauer's shade lingers over their imagination. Last May, Kathryn Jean Lopez, editor of *National Review Online*, asked *What Would the Founders Do?* author Richard Brookheiser, "Does the 8th Amendment suggest ... that the Founders would not side with Jack Bauer (pro) on torture?" In September, giving the impression that books make her think of television shows, when interviewing *Washington*



*Times* national security reporter Bill Gertz about his latest tome, Lopez said, “Most of us think Jack Bauer nowadays when we think of counterintelligence. Is there anything real about him?” This January, after the latest season premiere, Lopez couldn’t help herself. In a conversation with Republican presidential candidate Mike Huckabee, she burred, “Do you watch *24*? If so: Can we learn anything from Jack Bauer to help us win this war we’re in?” Huckabee put her down easy, noting that his wife enjoyed the show.

But singing Bauer’s hosannas isn’t restricted to *National Review Online*. It’s also the practice of syndicated columnists. In his Jan. 17, 2007 column, Ben Shapiro declared, “torture will often serve a useful purpose,” and proposed a utilitarian ethic for its use, saying, “If torturing a particular terrorist is useful—if we engage in the complicated calculus that tells us that the benefits outweigh the harms—torture is not only justified, it is morally right.” The title of his column: “Where’s Jack Bauer When You Need Him?”

Cal Thomas has also devoted column space, diagramming the plots of *24* to make a pro-torture point. In one 2005 episode, Bauer confronted a new challenge: the law. Thomas mourned, “An ACLU-type lawyer shows up at CTU headquarters ... with a court order forbidding torture of the suspect.” Life was imitating art, Thomas warned, “the scarier drama that is being played out by the United States Army, which last week announced it is preparing to issue a new interrogations manual that specifically bars the use of ‘harsh’ techniques of the type used at Abu Ghraib prison.” Luckily, in the show Bauer hatched a plan to release the suspect then detain and torture him outside of CTU headquarters.

The frequent recourse to torture has attracted the attention of both the military and veteran interrogators in the

FBI. As reported by Jane Mayer in *The New Yorker*, several experts advised *24*’s creative team about techniques that are more effective than torture at obtaining information. Army Brigadier Gen. Patrick Finnegan, dean of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, let producers and writers know that the show exerted a strong and noxious influence over his students. The newest recruits have been watching Jack Bauer since they were 14. The general told Mayer, “The disturbing thing is that although torture may cause Jack Bauer some angst, it is always the patriotic thing to do.” One former Army interrogator related how soldiers in Iraq watch DVDs of the show and then try to imitate Bauer’s interrogation methods on their own prisoners.

THE EFFECT IS TO **ACCLIMATE THE AUDIENCE** TO A WORLD IN WHICH THE THREAT OF **SPECTACULAR TERRORIST VIOLENCE** IS WHITE NOISE—A CONSTANT, **OMNIPRESENT FORCE** IN THE DAY-TO-DAY LIVES OF AMERICANS.

The show not only informs or reinforces views on torture, it shapes viewers’ perspective of the entire war on terror. Each day in *24* is filled with exotic threats, byzantine intrigues in the White House, and a dash of domestic turmoil. Typically, while Jack runs across Los Angeles in search of bad guys to beat down, a subplot will develop in the suburbs. In one instance, we’re introduced to a family in which a vivacious blonde is about to wed a Persian-American who works with her father. Is the groom a terrorist, or is it the father, or both? The effect is to acclimate the audience to a world in which the threat of spectacular terrorist violence is white noise—a constant, omnipresent force in the day-to-day lives of Americans, if only they will stop and notice it. Don’t let your mind fix

itself entirely on wedding centerpieces and catering: there may be a terrorist in your house.

The latest season, which premiered in January, placed Jack Bauer in an alarming situation. Instead of trying to prevent potential attacks, Bauer had to fight a wave of terrorism already in progress on American soil, culminating in a nuclear detonation in the Valencia section of Los Angeles. This dramatic turn inspired comment around the ideological spectrum.

Liberal newscaster Keith Olbermann saw the ramifications of this high-wire drama: “In case you missed the point, the show finished up with a nuclear weapon detonating in a major American city, literally conjuring up the administration’s imagery for the war in Iraq: the

good old mushroom cloud.” One is tempted to dismiss the oleaginous Olbermann’s speculations about the connection between *24* and the political passions of the Right until confronted by the rapturous testimony of conservatives themselves.

Feeling the weight of public opinion turning against the war in Iraq and the waning of enthusiasm for the war on terror, some conservatives saw in this fictional nuclear attack a reason to believe again. On *NewsBusters.org*, a project of the conservative Media Research Center, contributing editor Noel Sheppard was overcome as he stared at the computer-generated mushroom cloud: “Personally, I was left speechless for several minutes after the stunning conclusion, and had to watch the second hour again to convince

myself that I had actually seen what I had seen..." He went on, "this ... should be required viewing for all media members who question what's at risk, and whether there really is a war on terror." Sad news when a real war needs fictional proof. Kathryn Lopez was also moved by this sight of carnage, blogging on *The Corner*: "To everyone who goes to work today protecting you, me, our families, freedom: Remember Valencia."

The conservative obsession with *24* has gone beyond popular audiences into think tanks. Last summer the Heritage Foundation assembled a panel on the show, including not only producers, writers, and actors, but Heritage scholars and Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff, who praised the series for "reflect[ing] real life." Emcee Rush Limbaugh asked the stars whether they "had problems with their friends" in Hollywood because the show is pro-American. "Just jealousy," replied Carlos Bernard to the audience's laughter.

AFTER THE PREMIERE OF THE **FIFTH SEASON**, *NATIONAL REVIEW*'S JOHN J. MILLER RELISHED THE "**BEST LINE**": "YOU ARE GONNA TELL ME WHAT I WANT TO KNOW. IT'S JUST A QUESTION OF HOW MUCH YOU WANT IT TO HURT."

James Jay Carafano, a Heritage Senior Research Fellow in counterterrorism and defense, dissented from the conservative consensus, noting that the ticking time bomb situation, "has no basis in reality." Instead of the heroics of Bauer, Carafano explained that effective counterterrorism is accomplished through "good law enforcement" and hundreds of people diligently performing tedious security tasks at our borders and in intelligence agencies. Limbaugh struggled to restore the pep-rally atmosphere—"The vice president's a huge fan. Secretary Rumsfeld's a huge fan."—but

even executive producer Howard Gordon reminded the audience: "It's just a show."

Still, conservative adoration carries on undiminished. On the HBO panel show "Real Time with Bill Maher," economist Stephen Moore, praised the Military Commissions Act as "Jack-Bauer justice." "He should run the CIA," Moore continued. "I love this guy. I wish it were real life. ... This guy knows how to interrogate guys. He takes them in, shoots them in the leg, 'Tell me where the bomb is,' and most Americans want those kind of tactics because they know tens of thousands of lives are at risk."

Moore's appropriation of Bauer for political debating points may be silly, but it shouldn't surprise. Our superheroes are often the product of politics. In bright colors and fantastic arcs, the wizards of our popular culture conjure stories by redrawing the ideological conflicts of their time. In the 1950s, Captain America became an anticommunist, pitted against Red Skull. In the

daily harassed by the bureaucratic minutia of their hum-drum jobs, can't help being attracted to a man who barks at his superiors, "We don't have time for this!" as he takes on the ultimate job of keeping his country and his family safe. In the *Weekly Standard*, Martha Bayles rhapsodized, "When imagining a nuclear bomb about to explode in L.A., or a weaponized virus about to be released in eleven major cities, we welcome Jack's Odyssean alertness, courage, and cunning." One could add to this list Jack's indomitable patriotism—his willingness to suffer any fate rather than see his nation harmed. To Bayles's credit, she voices what she believes to be the mixed feelings of Americans about his methods: "it is harder to swallow his readiness to torture. For most of its history, American entertainment has depicted torture as pure evil. So it is jarring to see it routinely ordered, even inflicted, by the good guys."

But for so many, even in the conservative movement, it is exactly Jack Bauer's brutal tactics that make him worth admiring. After the premiere of the fifth season, *National Review*'s John J. Miller relished the "best line": "You are gonna tell me what I want to know. It's just a question of how much you want it to hurt."

In *24*, the war on terror is an omnipresent ticking clock, pitting our legitimate security needs against the most cherished tenets of our civilization. The stress one hour of this imposes on Jack Bauer alone makes good drama, but its extension to all America, for an indefinite time, is a farce. The devotion to *24* and its protagonist demonstrates what few may care to admit: in the war on terror, the conservative movement has become willing to sacrifice principle to passion and difficult moral reasoning to utility. As escapism, *24* is riveting; as a parable for our time, it is revolting. ■

# Bloggers vs. the Lobby

Israel's propaganda fortress faces a surprising new challenge.

By Scott McConnell

DESPITE THE FAILURE IN IRAQ, the repudiation of the president's foreign policy in opinion polls and the 2006 elections, and the collapse of respect for the U.S. in most other countries, support for the Bush Doctrine of preventive war remains surprisingly intact among one important slice of Americans: the presidential candidates of both major parties. *New York Times* columnist David Brooks recently lamented that Democratic contenders were sounding soft, crafting their foreign-policy positions to generate "applause lines in Iowa." He needn't have worried. The parade of White House aspirants to appear before a hawkish Israeli audience in Herzliya, and an equally hawkish AIPAC crowd in New York, is a truer gauge of where leading candidates stand.

On New Year's Day, Israeli superhawk Benjamin Netanyahu called for an "intense international public relations front" to persuade Americans of the need for military confrontation with Iran. The sight of John Edwards addressing a conference in Israel by satellite feed, along with John McCain, Rudy Giuliani, Newt Gingrich, and Mitt Romney—the latter two actually flew in to speak in person—indicated that the front already exists. All the candidates spoke as if preemptive war in the Middle East was a tried and true success. As a correspondent from *Jewish Week* summed it up, the U.S. presidential hopefuls were "competing to see who can be most strident in defense of the Jewish state." The consensus choice for the competition's winner was Romney,

but the putatively liberal Edwards, who described preventing Iran from securing nuclear weapons as "the greatest challenge of our generation," made a surprisingly strong showing. No leading presidential contender suggested that attacking Iran might be a bad idea.

This hawkishness is actually an outlier sentiment, popular only among those running for office. In Washington, it's difficult to find a foreign-policy expert who thinks that any good would come of a strike on Iran. Even the neocons have their doubts. The Iraq War, miserable concept that it was, had far more respected backers.

American military options are poor. Surgical air strikes wouldn't do anything decisive to Iran's nuclear program, but they would create huge problems for Americans in Iraq and perhaps lead to a two or threefold rise in the price of oil. The U.S. lacks the troops to enforce regime change through a land invasion and has already demonstrated its inability to successfully occupy a Muslim country one-third Iran's size. Furthermore, Iran, according to U.S. intelligence estimates, is ten years away from a nuclear weapon. Its seemingly nutty current president is losing support in the country. Those most theologically opposed to the Shia Islam that Tehran espouses are the very al-Qaeda Sunnis who set this dreadful train of events in motion in the first place.

So why do leading politicians line up for "The Bush Doctrine: Take Two"? On the Republican side, it might be explained by a desire to cater to elements of the

Christian Right that believe a final showdown with Islam is called for on religious grounds, or to talk-radio listeners who want to nuke the "Islamofascists" because that's what weapons are made for. Such groups form part of the GOP base. But what of Edwards, what of Hillary Clinton—both eager to be on the record for keeping all options on the table? It's a question that cannot be truthfully answered without reference to the neuralgic subject of the Israel lobby.

It is a tough issue to address, as Gen. Wesley Clark, a middle-of-the-pack Democratic presidential contender in 2004, recently discovered. Upon reading an Arnaud de Borchgrave column that discussed a then incipient Israeli campaign to pressure Hillary Clinton and other Democrats to "publicly support immediate action by Bush against Iran," he lost his cool, saying to Arianna Huffington, "How can you talk about bombing a country when you won't even talk to them? It's outrageous. We're the United States of America; we don't do that." Pressed by Huffington to explain why he was sure Bush would attack Iran, he answered, "You just have to read what's in the Israeli press. The Jewish community is divided but there is so much pressure being channeled from the New York money people to the office seekers."

This was an awkward way to put it; the euphemism surely sounded more contentious than anything Clark might have said straightforwardly. And of course some people chose to ignore

Clark's correct assertion that the Jewish community was very divided on the Iran issue. Within days, the general was in caught in a familiar crossfire, smeared as an instigator of anti-Semitism by some Republican Jewish organizations, his remarks headlined as "Protocols of the New York Money People" by a *Wall Street Journal* columnist. Soon he was engaged in a humiliating apology and repentance ritual with Abe Foxman of the ADL.

At this point the story could have taken the same path it has virtually every time something similar has happened since 1970—the originator of the "anti-Semitic" gaffe apologizes, some taint remains attached to his name, and everyone is reminded once again of the perils of crossing swords with "the lobby."

ONE COULD READ IN THE BLOGS SOME SURPRISING ASSERTIONS THAT AMOUNTED TO A TRUTH DEFENSE OF WES CLARK. IT SEEMED TO COME PRIMARILY FROM YOUNG, OR COMPARATIVELY YOUNG, JEWISH BLOGGERS.

But things took a different course, for significant reasons. It hasn't yet been established that the blogosphere has changed the nature of American politics in any fundamental way. Obviously it can quickly focus a great deal of attention on something—Trent Lott's seemingly appreciative remarks on Strom Thurmond's racial views of 60 years ago, for example—that might have gone completely unnoticed, thus turning Washington into even more of a fishbowl. And some minor lesson can probably be learned from John Edwards's awkward effort to hire "edgy" left-wing bloggers, with all the unedited vulgarities they bring with them. But blogs may foment serious debate about difficult subjects and change the climate of opinion in meaningful ways. In the aftermath of

Herzliya and the Clark episode, it seemed as if this was actually happening.

For within a day or two, one could read in the blogs some surprising assertions that amounted to a truth defense of Wes Clark. It seemed to come primarily from young, or comparatively young, Jewish bloggers. Observations that had been bandied about for years in private seemed to burst forth where many people could see them. This was welcome and suggests a broadening and deepening of the peace movement that so notably failed to stop the Iraq War. Suddenly there were Jewish voices talking about the Israel lobby as an established fact and, to be frank, as a bit of a problem. Significantly, these were not voices from an older and more alienated Chomskyian Left but from an *American Prospect*-like liberal mainstream.

In early February, Glenn Greenwald, a New York attorney who recently published a book on the Patriot Act, wrote a blog entry that focused on the New York AIPAC gathering attended by both John Edwards and Hillary Clinton. Greenwald quoted an article from the *New York Sun*—there is no more unimpeachably right-wing Zionist source—that featured Democratic political consultant Hank Sheinkopf's claim that "New York is the ATM for American politicians. Large amounts of money come from the Jewish community. If ... you want dollars from that group, you need to show that you're interested in the issue that matters most to them." The issue that matters most, the article went on to say, is Israel, and what this group most wants to hear with regard

to Israel is commitment to bellicosity toward Iran. Edwards and Mrs. Clinton did their best to comply, though according to a report in the equally Likud-friendly *New York Post*, Clinton apparently disappointed some in attendance by suggesting that diplomacy might be attempted before war. "This is the wrong crowd to do that with," commented one attendee.

Greenwald went on to point out that these articles made exactly the same point that Clark made, adding, "It is simply true that there are large and extremely influential Jewish donor groups which are agitating for a U.S. war against Iran, and that is the case because those groups are devoted to promoting Israel's interests and they perceive it to be in Israel's interests for the U.S. to militarily confront Iran."

Greenwald's post was not the only one. Matthew Yglesias, a young writer with a blog and similar political orientation, also addressed the Clark issue, noting that while Jewish opinion was divided on Iran, "Everything Clark said, in short, is true. What's more, everyone knows it's true." Yglesias pointed out that it is seemingly permissible to refer to the financial clout Jews wield in the Democratic Party if one is being supportive of America's self-proclaimed "pro-Israel" forces, but if you're critical of this influence, you're denounced as an anti-Semite.

Ezra Klein, another young blogger, also referred to the Clark episode, and his post addressed the question that underlies the entire issue: the vulnerability of Israel to Iranian nuclear weapons. Did not the concentration of Jews in a small state surrounded by hostile neighbors raise questions about the usefulness of the Zionist enterprise in general, since the whole point was to make Jews more rather than less secure?

Of course any sensible person recognizes that an Iranian nuclear weapon



would raise serious strategic concerns for Israel, likely forcing it into the deterrent posture of mutual assured destruction that the United States had to endure during much of the Cold War. Addressing these dilemmas, one (regrettably anonymous) commenter on Klein's blog wrote:

I'd suggest a second conclusion: Make friends with the neighbors. We've got a long history of doing it. Only this time it would be from a position of strength, which is ultimately the purpose of the State of Israel. Yes, there are deep rooted, generational hostilities at play. But we Jews excel at all sorts of things that make life better for people: the practice of medicine and law, scientific research, and yes, commerce. If there were a real commitment, not just to peace, but to regional prosperity, it would happen.

However "unrealistic" this vision might seem in the near term, it deserves to be quoted at length. Its noble vision stands alone against the tremendously well-funded propaganda edifice of the Israel lobby, from AIPAC and the Anti-Defamation League to the American Jewish Committee and multiple other groups, whose dank worldview reaches deep into the conservative think tanks and the upper echelons of the Bush administration. The AIPAC sensibility is expressed in cruder form by right-wing talk-radio hosts who every day try to soften up their listeners to the idea of American nuclear strikes against Muslim cities.

But this hopeless view of the world, however much it is amplified by today's Jewish establishment, is not the only perspective of American Jews. Indeed it is not even the majority view. A poll by the American Jewish Committee revealed that support among Jews for a military

**The tentative nuclear agreement with North Korea, approved by President Bush, generated significant debate in the administration.**

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice lobbied hard for the pact, looking for a tangible diplomatic victory to counter a string of perceived failures in Iraq and elsewhere in the Middle East. Rice proposed a number of U.S. concessions to the North Koreans, including easing up on financial sanctions and beginning the process of removing North Korea from a list of terrorism sponsors. The deal, which was opposed by Vice President Dick Cheney and sharply criticized by neoconservatives, such as Elliott Abrams at the NSC and former UN Ambassador John Bolton, is essentially the same as the 1994 Clinton agreement that Bush repudiated when he took office. Also, it leaves unresolved the issue of North Korea's existing nuclear arsenal. The neocons are particularly concerned that it provides an unwelcome model for rapprochement with Iran.



**Reports from Israel on recently aborted peace talks with Syria reveal that the two sides were very close to a complete agreement before the White House intervened and ordered Tel Aviv to cease its efforts.**

In January 2004, the secret talks began in Turkey under the government of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and then moved to Switzerland. By September 2005, tentative agreement had been reached in most areas, including borders, water supplies, and political issues, with Syria also agreeing to expel Hamas officials from Damascus and limit support for Hezbollah. Two CIA senior officers attended most meetings, reporting on developments directly to Vice President Dick Cheney's White House office. According to one source, the Baker-Hamilton Commission's recommendation that Washington negotiate with all of Iraq's neighbors was based on knowledge that the talks were going on and the parties were close to an agreement. At that point, however, the Bush Administration intervened decisively, as Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs State C. David Welch, who had attended the last meetings, informed Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert that Washington, preferring regime change in Syria, would not support an agreement with the government of President Bashar al-Assad. In Israel, the story of the failed negotiations was leaked to the media in early January, when all parties quickly denied it, though it has resurfaced repeatedly since that time revealing *inter alia* that many Israelis would have welcomed a final peace agreement with Damascus. On Jan. 8, President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt also stirred the pot, complaining to an Israeli journalist that Washington had actively obstructed the Israeli-Syrian peace process. Perhaps troubled by the Syrian story and what it reveals, many Israelis are also less than enthusiastic in supporting their government's continuing push for a war against Iran to destroy its nuclear program, a drive generated as much by neoconservatives in Washington as by politicians in Tel Aviv. Polls indicate that more than half of Israelis are now apprehensive about Iran's ability to retaliate if attacked and favor a diplomatic solution to the problem.

---

*Philip Giraldi, a former CIA Officer, is a partner in Cannistraro Associates, an international security consultancy.*

strike against Iran had dropped from 49 percent last year to 38 percent at present.

One could argue that the dovish sentiment expressed by the commenter on the Klein blog is not only more grounded in history, human nature, and the particular Jewish experience than the one we hear from the American Jewish establishment before which Clinton, Edwards, Romney, and Giuliani kowtow. Is it really practical to think that Israel's long-term security needs can be satisfied by having the United States smash the country's potential enemies as they arise, again and again?

playwright Tony Kushner, or even the *Washington Post's* Richard Cohen, the latter hardly a strident critic of Israel. As Yglesias bluntly explained it, "the idea, basically, is to scare the goyim who figure that while liberal Jews can take the heat, they probably can't, and had best just avoid talking about the whole thing."

Yglesias is on to something important here, though the situation is more complicated than he described. Both Jews and gentiles have been raising the volume of discussion about the American-Israeli relationship and Israeli poli-

their personal and professional lives. To fight a battle without Jewish colleagues, or even against Jewish colleagues, is likely to feel rather lonely. This is no doubt less true for hardcore Christian Zionists—curiously the most aggressively Likudnik of all segments of Christian opinion—than it is for other gentiles. But it is this sentiment that makes the new effervescence of Jewish dissent so important for the country at the present moment. It opens a door for Christians to voice opinions they might otherwise keep to themselves—not for fear of what Abe Foxman might say about them, but out of discomfort of being isolated from the urban, "cosmopolitan," Jewish-influenced milieu of which they have long been part.

It may be beyond the American people's power to stop George W. Bush from launching another preventive war. But even though the president and his top advisers can isolate themselves from currents of public opinion, that is less the case for top military officers. And it is far more likely that they will find ways to raise meaningful speed-bumps and roadblocks on the route to an expanded war if there is a large enough public outcry against it. Right now there is not. Indeed, key Democrats and Republicans are maneuvering for applause lines in Herzliya as much as in Iowa. There remains a policy-expert consensus that attacking Iran would be very foolish, but it is hardly loud and far from powerful. It has no political force behind it.

That's why the truth defense floated on behalf of Wes Clark was important, and that's why the mockery that has greeted the AJC's claim that Jews who criticize Israel are "anti-Semites" are such hopeful signs: they offer the possibility of a movement rising that could save the United States from compounding the errors it has already made. ■

## TO FIGHT A BATTLE WITHOUT JEWISH COLLEAGUES, OR EVEN AGAINST JEWISH COLLEAGUES, IS LIKELY TO FEEL RATHER LONELY.

The blogosphere is playing a role in bringing to the fore these kinds of dissenting views—though they may be majority views—letting them circulate and evolve under the test of critical argument. But even without the blogs, there have been signs that the lobby's edifice is cracking. How else can one interpret the amazing document published by the American Jewish Committee last month, which accused several prominent American Jews of "anti-Semitism" because of their criticisms of current Israeli policies? It is one thing to claim that Christians who criticize Israel or the American relationship to Israel are motivated by anti-Semitism; this has long been a standard rhetorical tactic. But to wield that word against Jews—several of them very prominent in journalism, culture and academia—seemed so silly as to be a symptom of something like panic, as if the traditional big powers feel the debate about Israel and American foreign policy is veering out of their control.

Perhaps the AJC's targets really weren't only Professor Tony Judt or

cies. On the Jewish side, there is a profusion of important peace-oriented websites. The explosion of interest in the Walt-Mearsheimer essay and Jimmy Carter's book evince a Christian awakening of the Mideast's critical importance. The perilous present geopolitical context explains this: a great many people wouldn't risk the opprobrium of the lobby for the sake of the Palestinians, who often wage their struggle far less impressively than one might wish. But letting the lobby influence American foreign policy toward Iraq raises the stakes mightily. Allowing Bibi Netanyahu and his American allies to call the tune of U.S. policy toward Iran is far too much to bear.

But it's true that many Christians won't enter this battle without Jewish allies or at least will join it with less enthusiasm. It's not simply that they can't take the heat. It's that those who have spent much time in journalism or academia or trying to influence public policy have generally done so alongside Jews and are accustomed to having Jews play significant roles in

# Middle Men

The blue base is looking for old liberals, not new Democrats.

By W. James Antle III

TWO WEEKS BEFORE the midterm elections, Tennessee's Democratic Senate nominee, Harold Ford, received a boost most candidates can only dream about. The five-term congressman was featured on the cover of *Newsweek* for a story—headlined “Not Your Daddy's Democrat”—touting him as the type of candidate his party would need to reclaim control of Congress.

It was a compelling storyline. Ford is the 36-year-old son of Memphis' most influential black political family yet is equally at ease with his state's white rural voters. He is a red-state Democrat who is conservative on values and hawkish on national security, backing President Bush on the Iraq War almost as enthusiastically as his Republican opponent. He is young, ambitious, and most of all, difficult to dismiss as a conventional liberal. The election results, however, were anticlimactic. Ford came up just short in his bid to succeed departing GOP Sen. Bill Frist, becoming only the Democrat to lose a close Senate race in 2006, even as his party won majorities in both houses.

But Ford isn't about to leave the political scene. In January, he became chairman of the Democratic Leadership Council (DLC), an influential organization that has spent the last two decades trying to move the Democratic Party to the center. Ford was a good pick for both sides. The DLC won a major spokesman who had ties to its sometime critics in the Congressional Black Caucus, would potentially help broaden the centrist group's appeal, and, most importantly, wasn't

“independent Democrat” Joe Lieberman. The ex-congressman retained a visible position to help him in a future run for statewide office in Tennessee.

Ford may nevertheless be a symbol of the electoral problems faced by New Democrats. Critics charge that the 2006 election offered a stern rebuke to the DLC's model for how Democrats should campaign. Many of the party's winning candidates were not cautious, business-friendly centrists but outspoken populists who were critical of large corporations, income inequality, and free trade. And rather than triangulating on Iraq, many of them took on the war directly.

While Ford was narrowly losing in Tennessee, Democrat Sherrod Brown beat Republican Sen. Mike DeWine by a double-digit margin in Ohio. Brown was adamantly antiwar, staunchly liberal on social issues, and outspoken about what he described as “the betrayal of the middle class and the working poor” by the country's economic elites. He doesn't just inveigh against NAFTA-style trade agreements on the stump; he actually wrote a book titled *The Myths of Free Trade: Why American Trade Policy Has Failed*. Instead of *Newsweek*, Brown appeared on the cover of *The Nation*. The accompanying story quoted the progressive writer Thomas Frank calling him “the rare Democrat who actually understands what's the matter with Kansas.”

It is easy to imagine such a candidate playing well in Massachusetts or Vermont. Brown won in Ohio, a crucial swing state that gave George W. Bush his 2004 margin of victory in the Electoral

College. Only a few years ago, the conventional wisdom was that Ohio had become too conservative for a Democrat like Brown to win statewide.

Another example of a winning Democratic candidate outside the DLC mold is Virginia's Sen. James Webb. Webb was certainly a “different kind of Democrat”—a former Republican who served Ronald Reagan, a supporter of gun rights, and a gruff former Marine—but not in the way that phrase is usually understood.

Like Brown, he was passionately antiwar and caustic in his criticism of free trade and businesses that outsource jobs overseas. Shortly after Webb defeated Republican Sen. George Allen, he published an op-ed piece decrying the concentration of wealth in America—in the *Wall Street Journal*, of all places. Webb may have benefited from Allen's numerous self-inflicted wounds, but his path to a Senate seat from still-reddish Virginia was certainly not according to the prescriptions of the DLC's *Blueprint* magazine.

In every region of the country, there are numerous examples of Democratic candidates who won in 2006 not by triangulating on the war or economics but by contrasting themselves with the Republicans. While there are also significant counterexamples of successful centrists—Lieberman's decisive win over Ned Lamont comes to mind—it is nevertheless clear that plenty of economically liberal, antiwar Democrats got elected last year without following the DLC playbook.

Democratic activist David Sirota, a persistent DLC critic, offers a less equivocal assessment. "There's no evidence that the DLC model has ever won elections," he says. Democratic voters are more likely to veer right on social issues than economics or foreign policy. "There is simply no constituency for a socially liberal, economically corporatist politics," Sirota concludes. That's a long way from the 1990s analysis, repeated by observers across the political spectrum, that the DLC had made it possible for Democrats to win national elections again.

The Democratic Leadership Council has always been controversial. The group was founded in 1985 after Ronald Reagan's 49-state landslide convinced many Democrats that their party was in serious jeopardy. They wanted to get tougher on national security and softer in their treatment of business, splitting the difference between Reaganomics and welfarism.

## MOST OF THE **DLC'S PRINCIPALS BACKED THE IRAQ WAR**, SEPARATING THEMSELVES FROM A **GROWING MAJORITY OF DEMOCRATS**.

The DLC started out with 43 elected officials and two main staffers, Al From and Will Marshall. They originally hoped to help a Southern moderate, like early supporters Sen. Sam Nunn of Georgia or Sen. Chuck Robb of Virginia, win the Democratic presidential nomination in 1988.

Yet the Democrats proved difficult to reform. Moderates hoped to influence the 1988 nomination process through the creation of a Super Tuesday round of primaries in the South, which ended up backfiring when Jesse Jackson actually won them. Jackson was exactly the kind of Democrat the DLC had hoped to sideline. The civil-rights activist was equally offhand with them, calling the centrists "Democrats for the Leisure Class."

The electoral debacle that followed, with Massachusetts liberal Michael Dukakis carrying only ten states against the uninspiring George H.W. Bush, nevertheless convinced many ambitious young Democrats that the DLC had a point. Triangulation came naturally to these politicians, as they were to the right of the national party but often to the left of the conservative Southerners and neoconservative intellectuals then migrating to the GOP. In addition to Connecticut's Lieberman and Louisiana Sen. John Breaux, two sons of the moderate New South became especially prominent supporters of the DLC—Arkansas Gov. Bill Clinton and Tennessee Sen. Al Gore, the men who would head the next Democratic ticket in 1992.

The Clinton-Gore victories in 1992 and 1996 were seen as a vindication of Democratic centrism. In perfect third-way fashion, Clinton told voters, "we

don't need tax-and-spend and we don't need trickle-down." Tax increases on the wealthy were paired with tax cuts for the working poor, in the form of an expanded earned income tax credit. The triangulating duo reformed welfare, helped pass NAFTA, "reinvented" government, accepted a Republican capital gains tax cut, and showed the world that Democrats were not afraid to use military force abroad. They were, as advertised, a different kind of Democrat than the McGoverns, Mondales, and even Carters that came before them.

Not everyone was convinced. "Bill Clinton ran as a populist in 1992," Sirota contends. "He railed against executive pay, he railed against trade with China,

he talked about family leave, and he even criticized NAFTA." The fact that Clinton didn't deliver on these issues once in office, Sirota argues, is no endorsement of the DLC. The liberal base's complaints grew louder once Democrats stopped winning elections, ending with the progressive vote in 2000 being split between the all-DLC Gore-Lieberman ticket and Ralph Nader.

Democratic economic divisions were soon trumped by disagreements over an even bigger issue: war. Since the New Democrat project is more concerned with neutralizing Republican political advantages than formulating a coherent ideology, after 9/11 the centrists adopted the stance that helped them appear strong during the Cold War—a soft neoconservatism. "They just think we can't look like wimps," says Terry Michael, executive director of the Washington Center for Politics and Journalism.

Most of the DLC's principals backed the Iraq War, separating themselves from a growing majority of Democrats. Will Marshall signed pro-invasion letters issued by the Project for the New American Century. Ford joined fellow congressional New Democrats in voting for the authorization of force. In 2004, by contrast, 95 percent of Democratic convention delegates were opposed to the war and 80 percent of them said they had been against it from the start. In response, Al From warned the *Boston Globe* that Democrats needed to be careful to avoid giving the impression that their antiwar stance meant they weren't "vigilant on security."

"[DLC Democrats] helped give us pro-war candidates when 90 percent of the party was antiwar," Michael says. "They're stuck in a mindset that doesn't recognize the Berlin Wall has fallen down." Many of the moderates tempered their enthusiasm for Iraq and assailed the Bush administration's conduct of the



war, but Sirota charges that they continue “to criticize efforts to do anything real about [the war] from the right.” Before the midterm elections, From challenged liberal bloggers to “stop trying to purify our party with venomous attacks on pro-defense Democrats like Lieberman and California Rep. Jane Harman.”

But the party seems to be shifting even further away from them. Even longtime New Democrats are starting to sound like old liberals. Gore was an early and avid critic of the war. John Edwards has repudiated his pro-war vote and is now campaigning on a populist platform of “two Americas.” Hillary Clinton is trying to keep one foot in each campaign—and protect her status as 2008 frontrunner.

Isolated on foreign policy and attacked on economics, the biggest problem DLC-style Democrats face is a Left that wants to fight Republicans rather than reach deals with them. “The DLC does a great job of reaching to the center but doesn’t energize the base,” says Michael. “You need to do both.” The centrists are therefore stuck fighting for policies too many Democratic activists bitterly oppose.

But it would be a mistake to conclude that the DLC approach to politics is finished. The organization was founded in response to real Democratic political liabilities, some of which persist even during the Bush administration. They are well funded, resourceful, and no doubt waiting for liberal overreach to make their politics relevant once again to a party that is hungry for victory. But their work would be easier if Democrats hadn’t already won a majority on Capitol Hill without following their counsel—and without Chairman Ford serving among them. ■

*W. James Antle III is associate editor of The American Spectator.*

# Nonconformist Conservative

Ralph de Toledano, 1916-2007

By Daniel McCarthy

I NEEDED A REVIEWER for Robert K. Landers’s *An Honest Writer: The Life and Times of James T. Farrell*. This was early 2004, and I was the assistant editor overseeing *TAC*’s book pages. Landers’s volume, about an important writer—author of the *Studs Lonigan* trilogy—who had an interesting political life, merited a review, but none of my literary contacts felt familiar enough with Farrell to take on the assignment. What was I to do?

I resorted to an old journalist’s trick: I googled “James T. Farrell” and “conservative.” Ralph de Toledano’s name popped up. By then 88 years old, Toledano had known Farrell personally. (“A pleasant guy to drink with,” he recalled in 1997, “unless you wanted to stay sober.”) But was Toledano still writing, and would he even take a call from a 26-year-old assistant editor?

He was and he did. Toledano wasn’t ready to be put out to pasture, and as I soon discovered, he could still write better than most journalists a quarter his age. Not only did he accept the Landers review, soon he was sending more pitches and completed articles than I could handle. The day in 2005 that Mark Felt was revealed as Deep Throat, Toledano called me to pitch a piece drawing on his own history with Felt—he had ghosted Felt’s 1979 “autobiography,” *The FBI Pyramid*. Toledano’s

energy was tremendous, and it extended to book projects as well: last year he published *Cry Havoc!*, an account of the Frankfurt School’s influence upon American culture, and he was shopping around both a volume on Mark Twain and a memoir provisionally titled (after Lionel Trilling’s book on E.M. Forster) *Exit, Pursued by a Bear*.

In the late 1930s, Toledano had been a student in Trilling and Jacques Barzun’s legendary senior colloquium at Columbia University. His peers were as illustrious as his professors. Thomas Merton, later a Trappist monk and author of the spiritual classic *The Seven Storey Mountain*, was a friend and classmate—and a fellow aficionado of jazz. Toledano’s first book, published in 1947 and still in print today, was the influential anthology *Frontiers of Jazz*. He would make his career as a political journalist, but perhaps his finest writing was as a music critic. He had the aptitude for it: a teenager he had for a time attended the Juilliard School.

His talent as a music critic may have been matched by his elegance as a poet. As a student, he twice won Columbia’s elite Philolexian Prize for Poetry. Collections of his mature verse include *Poems: You and I* and *The Apocrypha of Limbo*. The latter title reflects the deeply religious grounding of Toledano’s aesthetic sensibilities, a quality abundantly displayed

by his music journalism as well. He was a man caught in creative tension between his Sephardic Jewish heritage—he was descended from an eminent line of rabbis—and the Christianity, particularly Catholicism, that he so much admired. In faith as in politics, Toledano's thought was marked by reflection, not dogma. He truly was, as he once described himself, a "nonconformist conservative" in the very best sense.

But his literary and spiritual works are easily overlooked since it is as a political journalist that Ralph de Toledano is best known. He started out as a member of the near-communist Left, though he was never a Party member. The Hitler-Stalin pact put paid to his red sympathies, and as the 1940s progressed, he journeyed rightward. By 1948, he was an assistant editor at

case, *Seeds of Treason*, Chambers paid him a visit. "*Está en su casa*"—"you are in your own home," Toledano assured him, and as he later recalled, "By the end of the evening we were on the way to being friends." They carried on a correspondence—collected in 1997 as *Notes From the Underground*—that lasted until Chambers's death. The letters are a testament to both men, as well as a fascinating window into the early Cold War. (Among other things, the correspondence recounts Richard Nixon telling Toledano of a planned CIA assassination of South Korean leader Syngman Rhee.)

Toledano had become one of the leading anticommunist journalists of his generation. As William F. Buckley Jr. prepared to launch *National Review* in 1953, he asked Toledano to sign on as managing editor. Toledano declined. With a wife and two children to support,

duction to Toledano's 1960 memoir *Lament for a Generation*, as fine an autobiography as anyone on the Right produced in the first decades of the Cold War, second only to Chambers's magisterial *Witness*.

Toledano's reputation as an archetypal conservative-movement journalist belied the subtlety and independence of his political thought. He marched in lockstep with no one and was perfectly willing to critique the cherished assumptions of his colleagues on the Right. To Russell Kirk's remark in *The Conservative Mind* that "Half the history of American conservatism, or nearly that, must be an account of the Adamsses," Toledano replied, "Four men, no matter how brilliant, did not make up a tradition." He questioned whether there was enough of a genuinely conservative tradition in America to support Kirk's traditionalism. And he was even more critical of the classical liberals of the Right, telling Chambers—who felt the same way—"I read Mises with horror." What the country needed, Toledano believed, was an American Disraeli, a man who might say, like the Earl of Beaconsfield, "A sound conservative government? I understand Tory men and Whig measures." For a time, he thought he had found his Disraeli in Nixon—but we know how that turned out.

Ralph de Toledano died Feb. 3 at age 90. He was the last of his kind in more ways than one—the last of the great conservative Cold Warriors who had begun on the Left and perhaps the last spiritual seeker of his generation on the Right, who found religion no less essential for advancing more questions than answers. The Toledano type of literary, gentleman journalist is an endangered species on today's Right. Mourn his loss; we need more like him. ■

---

*Daniel McCarthy is senior editor of ISI Books.*

HE QUESTIONED **WHETHER THERE WAS ENOUGH OF A GENUINELY CONSERVATIVE TRADITION IN AMERICA** TO SUPPORT KIRK'S TRADITIONALISM. HE WAS EVEN MORE **CRITICAL OF THE CLASSICAL LIBERALS OF THE RIGHT**, TELLING CHAMBERS—WHO FELT THE SAME WAY—"I READ MISES WITH HORROR."

*Newsweek* and a well-known anticommunist—one of only two then at *Newsweek*, the other being Karl Hess, whose own political odyssey would take him from the Goldwater Right to the libertarian side of the New Left.

*Newsweek* assigned Toledano to cover the perjury and espionage scandal surrounding former State Department official Alger Hiss, an assignment that changed Toledano's life by bringing him into contact with Hiss's accuser, the ex-Communist and then-*Time* senior editor Whittaker Chambers. Toledano became one of Chambers's few supporters in the press. One day in 1949, while Toledano was at work on a book about the Hiss

he couldn't afford to walk away from *Newsweek* and roll the dice on *National Review*. But he did soon contribute to the magazine and would do so prolifically over the next 40 years.

By its very nature, political journalism—however important it may be in its own time—is an ephemeral thing, and Toledano, without an institutional tie as strong as Buckley's to *National Review*, is not as well remembered today as he deserves to be. He published over 20 books during his life, many of them short political biographies of leading public figures such as Ralph Nader, Cesar Chavez, J. Edgar Hoover, and Richard Nixon, who provided the intro-

# American Golden Set

Tilden and Budge were masterful tennis players, but they were also gentlemen who elevated the game by their good grace.

By Jeffrey Hart

BILL TILDEN did not just stroll into the West Side Tennis Club, he swept down the hallway that entered the main lounge and dining room like a large wave rolling toward the beach. Sometimes he wore a camel's hair topcoat, sometimes a bulky tennis sweater. Often one of his arms would be wrapped around half a dozen tennis rackets. Well over six feet tall, he had a long face, a wolfish grin, wide shoulders, narrow hips, and long, especially long legs. As he advanced down the corridor—"Hello, Freddie, sooo glad to see you," "There you are Emily, beautiful as ever"—his casual possession of the club not altogether welcome to many members, he strode past all those photographs of old champions—William Larned, Maurice McLaughlin, "Little Bill" Johnston, Helen Wills, Don Budge, Alice Marble—including his own photograph, with the dates of his seven national championships listed below it. He had won his first national championship here in 1920 when he was 27, then six more, 1921, 1922, 1923, 1924, 1925, and 1929.

Those who had seen both Tilden and Don Budge at their best could not decide who was the greatest in the history of the game. Budge was the first to win the "Grand Slam," as it then became called, a term derived from bridge. He had won the championships in Australia, Paris, Wimbledon, and Forest Hills, all of them grass, except at Roland Garros, where the courts were crushed

red brick. One day I happened to enter the pro shop, and whom did I see but Budge himself, with his racket in a vice on the workbench. He was putting strips of lead around the head of his racket, which was already a monstrous club with a grip of at least 5 inches. Budge had an arm about as big as my leg. "Why are you putting lead on you racket?" I asked. "It puts punch in my volley," he said. Punch in his volley. He must have dug divots in the grass courts outside. Budge had won one of the most famous matches in history, his Interzone Davis Cup match in 1937 at Wimbledon against the German champion Baron Gottfried von Cramm. Hitler arrived from Berlin just before the match. The baron went up 4-1 in the fifth set, both players at their peak, making twice as many winners as errors. Budge finally prevailed 8-6 in the final set, hitting a diving passing shot down the line against Cramm—and though lying stretched out on the court, unable to see if the shot had gone in, knew from the roar of the crowd that it had. Many people remained in the stands silent for an hour after the match, and Tilden himself said it had been the greatest match he ever saw.

Tilden often gave the junior players good advice, though one of my coaches said, "Stay away from that bastard." I had heard he was a homosexual, but I didn't know much about that. Oscar Wilde, I suppose. Maybe it was an English thing. Once I had a sore elbow, with a tournament coming up. "Play right

through it," Tilden said. So I did. Early in his career he had lost the top joint of a finger on his playing hand, and it hurt every time he hit the ball. But, seven championships.

Tilden had lots of great stories. "Once, when I had to play Lacoste," he said, "the French froze the balls." "Froze the balls?" "Yes. Lacoste invented the ball machine, and when you were playing him it was like playing the machine. The French as hosts were in charge of everything. So they flooded the slow courts, and they kept the balls refrigerated under the stands. The balls were like ice cubes. I couldn't have hit an ace with a cannon. I played his own game. And won." The greatest player in the world, playing "The Crocodile" on a swampy court, with balls that wouldn't bounce! French sportsmanship. Tilden admired the four great French players for their brilliance, but had reservations about Frenchness itself, saying in his autobiography, *My Story*, that Jean Borotra "was what passes for 'typically' French. That is to say, he had all the charm, warmth, glamour and complete insincerity which is Paris." Tilden was a good writer, indeed the author of many books. He appeared in Hollywood silent movies and the later talkies, as well as in several Broadway plays. He was also a ferocious bridge player, knew all the rules and also the interpretations of the rules. Not everyone appreciated this. Or that he almost always won.

All the players came to the West Side Tennis Club in those days when I was 16 and it was 1946.

When I stepped outside the door of the club for the first time and stood on the terrace, I saw a large horseshoe-shaped arrangement of courts—about 50 composition and clay courts around the perimeter and some 30 grass courts in the middle—surrounded by carefully kept flowerbeds. At one end of the horseshoe was the concrete stadium, the “House that Tilden Built,” so many were the people during the 1920s who had wanted to see him play.

That first day as I looked out, I saw Pauline Betz, a former champion, playing on a composition court nearby. And there was former heavyweight champion Gene Tunney playing doubles on a court beyond her. Gene Tunney was so big his racket looked like a toothpick in his hand. At the club I would meet not only Tilden and Budge but Bobby Riggs, Frank Parker, Bill Talbert, Francisco “Pancho” Segura, “Gorgeous” Gussie Moran, Alice Marble, Tony Trabert, Vic Seixas, Richard Gonzales. Not “Pancho” Gonzales. “Richard, please.” He was born in Los Angeles, and considered himself as American as anyone else. To me it seemed that everyone came to the club in the summer.

## THE MANNERS REQUIRED BY THE CLUB OF ALL CHAMPIONS, TOURNAMENT PLAYERS, CLUB MEMBERS, AND JUNIORS—ESPECIALLY JUNIORS—WERE CASUAL BUT ALSO STRICT, POLITE, UNDERSTATED, AND SELF-EFFACING.

It was the American Wimbledon: both citadels of the gentlemanly ideal, both with insignias consisting of gold tennis rackets within a gold circle. Over the entrance to Centre Court at Wimbledon a sign bore the lines from Kipling’s poem “If”: “If you can meet both triumph and disaster / And treat these two imposters

just the same...” then you will be a “man,” that is, a gentleman.

Triumph and disaster are to be faced without display, indeed with equanimity, since you know that the Game and its commanding traditions are more important than whether you win or lose. That’s why both Wimbledon and the West Side Tennis Club required white tennis clothes; colors could suggest self-display. And that’s why you shake hands at the end of a match and try to look as if you meant it. As Hamlet said to Queen Gertrude, “Affect a virtue if you have it not.” The Game is why a real tennis crowd never cheers an error. An error damages the ideal game. And that’s why you would never, ever throw a racket, let alone smash one on the ground. Bad manners insult the Game itself.

The manners required by the club of all champions, tournament players, club members, and juniors—especially juniors—were casual but also strict, polite, understated, self-effacing, broadly Protestant, and, historically, English in derivation. C.S. Lewis thought no Frenchman could be a gentleman—too overstated in manners, too much self, too little social distance. At the club, conspicuous ethnicity was discouraged. One of the junior players made the sign of the cross when he was in a tight spot

in a match. This, he was told, would not do. Some of the best players in the Club were Jewish, or were thought to be, but this wasn’t noticed. Many members were of course Catholic, Irish and Italian. But they had no ethnic characteristics. Protestant manners were the manners of a gentleman, or a lady, and

Protestants weren’t an ethnic group but the norm.

One time I was having lunch in the dining room with one of the better women players at the club. We saw Frank Parker walk in, champion in 1944 and 1945. It turned out, she knew him and he joined us for lunch. A handsome fellow, he was a bit eccentric, and opened an attaché case at the table. It was full of little bottles of pills. He took a couple at lunch. To my amazement, he asked if I would like to practice with him. He “needed some work on his backhand.” What? He had about the best backhand in tennis at that time.

My finest hour. We went out onto one of the green composition courts, below the left end of the terrace, which immediately became crowded with people. He hit a unique backhand—hard but with a slight underspin and relentless control—and as we hit back and forth, his shots kept creeping deeper and deeper until they were almost clipping the baseline. I kept digging these out and returning them. Then Frank, as I had begun to call him, stopped hitting and walked up to the net. He took off his slightly tinted prescription glasses.

“Where did you learn to hit the backhand?”

“Billy Talbert,” I said. “On the Seventh Regiment Armory wooden courts.”

I had been in the junior development program there, underage and illegally in the State Guard so I could join the Seventh Regiment Tennis Club. Talbert, who had a fine backhand, taught me to get my weight moving forward by lifting my rear foot a little as I hit the ball. Parker put his glasses back on.

“I thought it was Talbert,” he said. “Would you like to play a set?”

Play we did. Long rallies, his control beautiful, and he let me win three games. Playing Parker with much of the club watching, well, it was almost too much.



Another time I found myself in a doubles game on the grass against Alice Marble and a college player. She never played with other women. My partner was a club member, a professional piano player and a fine tennis player. Marble had won the national championships in 1939 and 1940, her career, like Budge's, interrupted by the war.

I CAN STILL REMEMBER SITTING ON THAT TERRACE **AFTER A DAY OF TENNIS,**  
SIPPING A GIN AND TONIC, **WATCHING THE SUN SET** OVER THE STADIUM, WHILE  
OFF IN THE DISTANCE **LIGHTS BEGIN TO GLITTER IN THE TOWERS OF MANHATTAN.**

She was blonde, tanned, had long legs and wide shoulders, and hit a surprisingly hard American twist serve, tough to handle on the grass. The match went along nicely, everyone holding serve. Then I threw up a lob up over Marble's head. Now very few women hit an overhead really hard, and I usually could pick one off and volley it back with authority. Not this time. Marble took a few steps back, and her overhead sounded like a pistol shot. The ball whizzed past, altogether too close for my physical safety. No more lobs that day to Alice Marble. Yes, she never played with other women. Maybe other women wouldn't play with her.

Bobby Riggs was great fun, coming to the club when he was in New York to play in the annual professional tournament. He would play with anyone, even us juniors, as long as we bet—for dimes, Cokes, anything. He was famous for outsmarting the London bookies in 1939, by betting he would win the singles, doubles, and mixed doubles at Wimbledon. Unheard of—and he got heavy odds against doing it. He figured he'd beat "Bunny" Austin, the British champion, but in fact beat Elwood Cooke in the final. He won the men's doubles with Cooke and the mixed doubles with Alice

Marble. With a small bet he collected a fortune from the bookies.

With his cocky duck-footed walk, he was nevertheless a superb athlete and had rodent-like speed around the court. He had every shot in the game and tricks off the shots, and he was a great tactician. A little-known fact is that he—not Tilden, not Budge, not Gonzales or

Kramer—holds the record for service aces in the Forest Hills Stadium. He was only 5'8", but he could serve ace after ace because of his powerful wrist. He could change the direction of the ball at the last instant of his service swing, hitting a fast one down the middle or swinging it wide. Impossible to read.

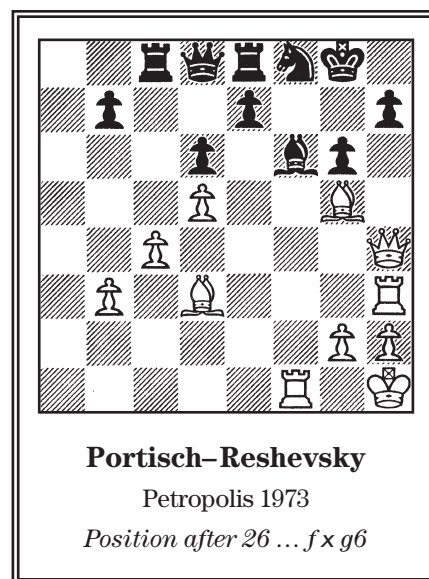
Every Saturday night during the summer, there was a formal dance. The routine was pretty strict. Your date usually was a club member. In fact, if a junior girl did not have a date for the dance as it approached, a senior member would nudge you: "You know, Mary Lou hasn't been asked..." Most of the girls lived in Forest Hills Gardens, where the red-brick required style had been designed by the architect son of Frederick Law Olmstead, the renowned landscape architect who, with Calvert Vaux, designed Central Park.

Always you bought an orchid corsage and picked up your date in the Gardens, walking to the club. Though teenagers, we aspired to adulthood—seersucker or blue blazers and neckties—and for dances we of course wore white formal jackets. We danced to the same music as adults—Rodgers and Hammerstein, Cole Porter, Irving Berlin, Strauss waltzes. There were some faster dances

too, brought forward from the 1920s, the Charleston and the Lindy Hop, named for Lindberg's 1927 "hop" from Long Island to Paris. Adult tournament players sometimes showed up, and we danced with the women. One of the unique features of the 1960s was that rock and roll gave the "kids" their own music, and the adults imitated them. We had it the other way around.

The beauty of the club and its ideals of conduct are permanent things for me. I can still remember sitting on that terrace after a day of tennis, sipping a gin and tonic, watching the sun set over the stadium, while off in the distance lights begin to glitter in the towers of Manhattan. Out across the grass courts dozens of sprinklers make rainbows against the dusk and guarantee that tomorrow the grass will still be its velvet green, the flowerbeds vari-colored, and I think of Scott Fitzgerald's essay about New York in the 1920s, "Come back, come back, O glittering and white." ■

*Jeffrey Hart is a senior editor of National Review and author, most recently, of The Making of the American Conservative Mind.*



# Breaking Ranks

The answer to military strain is not more troops but less war.

By Christopher Preble

LONG BEFORE they were clamoring for more troops in Iraq—30,000, 50,000, even 80,000 in Frederick Kagan's fondest imaginings—neoconservatives needed to swell the ranks of the American military to accomplish their global mission.

Now the Bush administration has granted their wish. The latest defense budget requests \$715 billion for fiscal year 2008—bloated enough that the president's \$50 billion to begin expanding the Army and Marine Corps seems comparatively temperate.

It's not. By this blueprint, the temporary increase of 30,000 Army personnel approved in January 2004 will become permanent. Bush then proposes adding another 35,000 troops over a five-year period, 7,000 each year, bringing total Army "end strength" to 547,000 in 2012. The Marine Corps, 180,000 strong today, will add 22,000 to its ranks.

Democrats eager to ensure that their newfound opposition to the Iraq War doesn't tarnish their national security credentials can't wait to vote yea. During a January hearing of the House Armed Services Committee, Missouri Democrat Ike Skelton congratulated himself: "Every time I had a chance to say, 'We need more Army troops, more Marines,' I said it. ... This increase is a smart policy. I'm more than pleased to say, better late than never." Rahm Emanuel, chairman of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, grudgingly praised the president for "realiz[ing] the need for increasing the size of the armed forces," but was quick to note, "this is where the Democrats have been for two years."

The think-tank community adds an enthusiastic second. In January 2005, the Project for a New American Century published an open letter to congressional leaders calling for "at least 25,000 troops each year over the next several years." The statement was signed by foreign-policy luminaries from across the spectrum from Will Marshall of the Progressive Policy Institute to *The New Republic's* Peter Beinart to AEI's Danielle Pletka.

But as it was in Iraq, the bipartisan consensus is again wrong. Incrementally expanding ground forces won't extricate us from the Baghdad bramble, it costs too much—far more over the long-term than the \$12.1 billion included in the president's budget—and it reflects a flawed conception of the nature of the threats we will likely face in the future. Advocates for a larger Army assume that all of the military's current missions are essential and that we must embark on many more. A better approach than arguing that we have too few troops to do all that we are doing would be to ask whether we should be doing all of these things in the first place.

It's tempting to assume that pouring troops into Iraq will rescue our failed policy. But by the time they are recruited, trained, exercised, and deployed, President Bush will be out office, and whoever moves into the White House on Jan. 21, 2009, will not want American troops to remain in Iraq indefinitely. As Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman Carl Levin noted, "it is important that we understand exactly what these additional personnel are needed for, in the

long term, that was not foreseen in the Quadrennial Defense Review submitted a year ago that rejected such increases. Do we intend to stay in Iraq for years to come? Does the administration think the 'long war' with terrorism is going to be won with large ground forces operating in foreign nations?"

Levin's concerns are well-placed. Expansion will cost \$95 billion from FY 2008-12, and Gordon Adams, a fellow at the Woodrow Wilson Center, estimates that it will add another \$15-20 billion each year after that. More soldiers need more helmets, uniforms, boots, and food, airplanes, helicopters, and trucks to get them to a fight, not to mention rifles and bullets once they get there.

If the troops are not going to salvage our sinking fortunes in Iraq, what would be this larger force's mission? We seem to be growing the Army without any clear sense of what we expect it to do. If we need more troops to conduct a war in Iran, Pakistan, or some other country, there is serious doubt that the American people would support such an endeavor and even more doubt we could prevail, as Iraq attests.

No nation is foolish enough to fight the United States using conventional means. To the extent that we need a deterrent against other nation-states, our massive nuclear arsenal in Air Force missile silos and U.S. Navy submarines is more than sufficient. Our conventional military dominance has encouraged potential adversaries to fight us in unconventional ways, however, and our national security strategy must adapt

accordingly. We learned that, belatedly, on 9/11.

Additional ground troops are of little use in combating a terrorist organization like al-Qaeda. Counterterrorism is not a personnel-intensive endeavor—the people involved rarely wear uniforms. The most successful operations rely on timely intelligence, effective cooperation with foreign militaries, and the integration of law enforcement, diplomacy, foreign assistance, and financial intervention—not the application of blunt military force. The plot to destroy airliners over the Atlantic, for example, was foiled by British law-enforcement personnel, working in conjunction with authorities in the U.S. and Pakistan. Of the 14 high-value al-Qaeda targets moved in September from once-secret CIA prisons to Guantanamo Bay, not a single one was captured by U.S. military personnel. In the most recent case to attract widespread international attention, Jainal Antel Sali, Jr., (aka Abu Solaiman) and Khadafi Janjalani, two leaders of the Abu Sayyaf terrorist organization, were shot and killed by

University of Chicago professor Robert Pape noted in a paper for the Cato Institute: “every suicide terrorist campaign since 1980 has been waged for defensive control of territory, to establish self-determination for a community facing the presence of foreign combat forces.” If more U.S. ground troops are stationed abroad—especially in predominantly Muslim countries—al-Qaeda and other Islamist terrorist organizations will feed on the resentment our presence generates to grow their ranks.

Even Paul Wolfowitz understood the utility of removing foreign troops from Muslim lands. In his February 2003 congressional testimony, he conceded that resentment over the stationing of U.S. forces in Saudi Arabia had been “Osama bin Laden’s principal recruiting device.” Looking ahead to the post-Hussein period, Wolfowitz implied that regime change would enable the United States to withdraw troops from the region: “I can’t imagine anyone here wanting to spend another \$30 billion to be there for another 12 years to continue helping recruit terrorists.”

not begin in 2003. The first Bush and Clinton administrations reduced the size of the military by roughly 40 percent after the end of the Cold War, but this smaller military has been used more times and in more places in the 15 years since the fall of the Berlin Wall than it was throughout 45 years of confrontation with the Soviet Union. Our troops have borne the brunt of this mismatch between means and ends.

A comprehensive approach to right-sizing the military must look at both the supply side—the numbers of troops, planes, and ships—but also at the demand side—where and when this military should be sent to fight.

Even the most powerful country in the world, measured both in terms of our military might and our economic vitality, must make choices. Our military is second-to-none, and our men and women in uniform are well-trained, extremely qualified, and highly motivated. But they cannot be everywhere, and they cannot do everything. We must be willing to evaluate each mission according to a crucial set of criteria: Is it vital to our national security? Have we exhausted all available alternatives? Does it have a reasonable chance of achieving its stated objective at an acceptable cost?

For the past decade, we have asked much of our soldiers, and they have responded honorably. But the American Armed Forces are under indisputable strain, and adding tens of thousands to their ranks offers no relief. More troops are not the answer. A more judicious use of these troops is. And unless our political leaders rethink their attitude toward the use of force abroad, they will wreck the finest military in history. ■

---

*Christopher Preble is director of foreign policy studies at the Cato Institute and a founding member of the Coalition for a Realistic Foreign Policy.*

## RELYING ON **LARGE CONCENTRATIONS OF CONVENTIONAL TROOPS** TO ACCOMPLISH WHAT SHOULD BE SURGICAL MISSIONS IS LIKELY TO **INCREASE THE TERRORIST THREAT.**

government security forces in the Philippines. Even when U.S. military assets are instrumental—as in the bombing that killed Abu Mussab al-Zarqawi in Iraq or the Predator-drone attack that killed Qaed Salim Sinan al-Harethi, al-Qaeda’s chief operative in Yemen and a suspect in the 2000 bombing of the *USS Cole*—such strikes were made possible by timely intelligence derived from non-military sources.

Relying on large concentrations of conventional troops to accomplish what should be surgical missions is likely to increase the terrorist threat. As

Yet that is precisely what our long-term presence in Iraq has done. The National Intelligence Estimate on Iraq, leaked to the media in September 2006, stated that the U.S. military presence there has served as a rallying point for Muslim radicals. And al-Qaeda, according to a letter intercepted by the U.S. military, considers the American troop presence to be a boon to its cause. An expanded military would give us all the tools needed to fumble our way into another strategic disaster.

No one disputes that our military is stressed, but the Army’s problems did

# Saving Feith

A new report gives the Pentagon intelligence peddler a pass.

By Philip Giraldi

PENTAGON INSPECTOR GENERAL Thomas Gimble's narrow report on the activities of Undersecretary of Defense Douglas Feith's Office of Special Plans was not quite a whitewash, but neither was it an indictment. The report, presented to Congress on Feb. 9, rightly condemned Feith's attempt to create what it charitably called "an alternative intelligence assessment process," lacking the checks and balances observed by the CIA, DIA, and INR. But no punishment was recommended for anyone involved in the relentless advocacy that enabled the slide to war. Nor did the investigation seek to determine possible involvement of the Office of Special Plans in the Niger uranium forgeries and cover-up, or in the generation and dissemination of false intelligence derived from foreign sources.

Per Gimble's careful parsing, Feith's activities were deemed "inappropriate" but "not illegal or unauthorized." And his investigation's scope was curiously limited: the year-long inquiry only examined one of the many questionable activities carried out by the Office of Special Plans, the purported link between Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein. The role of Feith's office in hatching the imaginary meeting between Mohammad Atta and Iraqi intelligence officials in Prague was significant, but it was only a single element in the much broader pattern of deception that provided the "evidence" President Bush used to persuade the American people that Saddam's Iraq was an existential threat akin to Hitler's Germany.

At best, any investigation conducted in-house, as this one was, will be more collegial than adversarial, and Gimble took pains not to speculate about motive. But Feith didn't come to the Pentagon without an agenda. The IG report found that his OSP "was predisposed to finding a significant relationship between Iraq and al Qaeda," and those who know Feith's history understand why.

Since the first Bush administration, Feith had been advising the Israeli government to pressure Washington to remove Saddam Hussein. So it was unsurprising when he joined Richard Perle, David Wurmser, and others in July 1996 to develop a position paper that had Iraqi regime change as its centerpiece. Intended for incoming Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the document, entitled "A Clean Break: A New Strategy for Securing the Realm," pushed the new government to launch pre-emptive war against Israel's Arab neighbors. "Israel has the opportunity to make a clean break," the paper said, "to engage every possible energy on rebuilding Zionism." Baghdad was first on the hit list—"Whoever inherits Iraq dominates the entire Levant strategically," they wrote—followed by attacks on Syria and Lebanon. To secure American support for "rolling back" Arab regimes, the group recommended phony motives for the invasions—in Syria's case counterfeiting, drug running, and WMD development.

Netanyahu rejected their advice, but with the election of George W. Bush, Perle assumed chairmanship of the

Defense Policy Board and Feith took the number-three post at the Pentagon, where Wurmser would oversee his Policy Counterterrorism Evaluation Group. The Clean Break authors were positioned for an audacious play—"reestablishing the principle of preemption" not by Israeli initiative but by American action—and Sept. 11 provided a moment of opportunity. Where cause did not exist, Feith manufactured pretext, just as the 1996 document advised, and the Israelis were key to making the case.

It has been reported that during the lead-up to the invasion of Iraq, Israeli military officers and diplomats had virtual carte-blanche access to Feith's offices and those of his boss Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz. (Both were investigated earlier in their careers on suspicion of passing secrets to Israel—Feith in 1982, Wolfowitz in 1978.) Former Office of Special Plans employees report that analysts working for Feith who were not uncritically supportive of the U.S.-Israel relationship were weeded out. A Feith associate, analyst Lawrence Franklin, is now serving a 13-year prison term for passing classified information to Israeli Embassy officials.

Feith's sympathies were scarcely secret. In 2003, National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice commented after a Feith presentation, "Thanks Doug, but when we want the Israeli position we'll invite the ambassador," while Secretary of State Colin Powell's Chief of Staff Lawrence Wilkerson described Feith "as a card-carrying member of Likud." But his cozy relation-



ship with the foreign source of much of his alternative information seemed not to concern the inspector general.

Though the report accuses Feith of “reporting of dubious quality or reliability,” he proclaims himself vindicated because it alleges nothing illegal. All along, he defended his role by claiming that he was not purveying intelligence but providing balance as a “policy making” official “challenging” the prevailing intelligence. He describes his PowerPoint presentation on the non-existent Saddam-al-Qaeda connection—which he called a “mature symbiotic relationship”—as a “policy briefing” not intended to be regarded as intelligence. Even Gimble agrees that this is nonsense, describing Feith’s briefing as an “intelligence product.” The IG report also notes somewhat laconically that there were several different versions of the briefing, suggesting that whatever factual or fictional information it contained was itself being tailored, like a sales pitch, to suit the audience.

Then there is the issue—which has never been completely investigated despite a request from the CIA’s former Director George Tenet—of how Feith’s presentation, based on over 50 documents, most of which were classified, was fortuitously leaked to Stephen Hayes at the always receptive *Weekly Standard*. At that time, several of the *Standard*’s regular contributors actually worked in Feith’s Office of Special Plans, a possible conflict of interest that has never been explained or examined. In November 2003, Hayes wrote an article called “Case Closed,” relying on information that was subsequently cited by Vice President Dick Cheney as proof positive of the al-Qaeda-Saddam connection. Cheney has continued to make that claim until quite recently, and as a result of that elaborately concocted piece of disinformation, most Americans still believe that there was a connection.

False “intelligence” introduced into the policy-making process by Feith and his acolytes and fed to an accomplice in the media was then cited by a senior government official to close the circle and successfully make the case for war.

Deliberate evasion of the intelligence community’s vetting process and illegal exposure of classified information aside, the Office of Special Plans was scheming in ways the IG report didn’t even attempt to address. OSP refined cherry picking, permitting the consumer to select information that supports a case while rejecting that which does not. Feith’s office also perfected the stovepipe: if they had a rumor or some tidbit of questionable information that might be dismissed by

to the White House, circumventing the intelligence agencies.

Finally, there is the question of war crimes, the likely reason that Feith and company are so sensitive about challenges to their ostensible roles as upstanding civil servants sworn to defend the American Republic. The Nuremberg tribunals established the now universally accepted principle that anyone who falsely makes a case for aggressive war should be considered a war criminal and held accountable. And there is much in the lead-up to the war against Iraq that suggests such a conclusion. Beyond the collection and stovepiping of dubious intelligence, the provenance of the Niger uranium forgeries has never been

#### HE DESCRIBES HIS POWERPOINT PRESENTATION ON THE **NON-EXISTENT SADDAM-AL-QAEDA CONNECTION** AS A “POLICY BRIEFING” NOT INTENDED TO BE REGARDED AS **INTELLIGENCE**.

the limp-wristed defeatists over at State or CIA, they could type it up on nice letterhead and send it directly up to their friends at the National Security Council or in the vice president’s office, where Stephen Hadley or Scooter Libby would ensure that it would be seen by their bosses. Much of the information sent out of the Office of Special Plans directly to its friends in the White House came from the Pentagon’s favorite fantasist Ahmad Chalabi, who was happy to provide sources describing Iraqi drones that could spray chemical weapons on New York City, as well vast dumps of chemical and biological weapons together with their associated labs. He also produced on demand sources detailing how Iraq was reconstituting its nuclear program. Back-channel intelligence from Israeli sources was frequently used to bolster the case being made by Chalabi’s informants and was scarcely more credible. But it was earmarked “reliable” and sent on

resolved to anyone’s satisfaction, and the possible role of the Office of Special Plans in their exploitation cannot be ruled out. If part of the government deliberately lied to another part to justify a war, the urgent need for a cover-up would explain the recently revealed intensity of the White House’s reaction to whistleblower Joseph Wilson, who exposed the forgeries.

Sen. Carl Levin, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee promises further hearings. But Gimble hasn’t given him much to work with. If the inspector general had only looked a little wider and deeper, he might have discerned a persistent pattern of questionable information being deliberately manipulated, then landing on the desks of White House officials to make a case for war. That would have made for an interesting report. ■

---

*Philip Giraldi, a former CIA Officer, is a partner in Cannistraro Associates, an international security consultancy.*

# Arts & Letters

## FILM

[*The Lives of Others*]

### Behind the Curtain

By Steve Sailer

WHEN THE SOVIET SUBMARINE film “The Hunt for Red October” appeared in 1990, a magazine headline described it with a sigh of relief as “The Last Cold War Movie.” And that proved largely prophetic. While the movie industry continues to mine the Third Reich’s dozen years, the much longer era of Communist tyranny in Eastern Europe has seemingly disappeared down the media memory hole.

In Germany, “It’s forbidden by law to deny the crimes of the Nazis,” observes historian Hubertus Knabe, “But it’s almost forbidden by custom since reunification to really discuss the crimes of the regime that turned East Germany into a prison.” Hence, a huge hit in Germany was “Good Bye, Lenin!”—a sweet comedy inspired by the misbegotten *Ostalgie* fad (nostalgia for the East).

The German drama “The Lives of Others” shows what we’ve been missing. Perhaps the best movie of 2006, this debut by a 33-year-old, 6’9” writer-director with the heel-clickingly Teutonic moniker of Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck depicts life in 1984 under the eyes of the Stasi secret police. They employed 1 percent of the East German workforce directly and 2 percent as secret informants.

In a masterful opening segment, Wiesler, a thin-lipped, middle-aged Stasi functionary, conducts a textbook interrogation of a hapless citizen accused (and, in effect, already convicted) of not snitching on a neighbor planning to escape to the West. When the prisoner protests his innocence, Wiesler replies, “If you believe we arrest people on a whim, that alone is enough to justify your arrest.” The secret policeman is played with charismatic restraint by East German actor Ulrich Muehe (who had discovered in his Stasi files in the 1990s details about himself reported by his wife).

Wiesler is next assigned to bug the chic—by East Berlin standards—apartment of a playwright named Dreyman, “our only non-subversive writer who is read in the West.” The handsome, boyish Dreyman (Sebastian Koch) is a nice guy who wishes his Party masters and his dissident artist friends would all just get along. He privately protests to the Minister of Culture the blacklisting of his old stage director after he had signed a protest seven years before. The writer is such a likeable golden boy that he might have gotten away with this insubordination, but the Minister has eyes for Dreyman’s leading lady and girlfriend, so he dispatches Wiesler to uncover something that will put him in prison.

In an operation so well-planned that you have to admire its professionalism, Wiesler’s team bugs each of Dreyman’s rooms, even the bathroom. Then, the agent settles in to listen from the attic, typing up detailed chronologies of the couple’s life together, such as “Vigorous intimacies ensued.”

Wiesler embodies every Teutonic tendency, including emotional repression and obsessive-compulsive punctuality. Yet, as terrifying as his efficiency is in a

bad cause, from von Donnersmarck’s refreshingly patriotic standpoint, his stereotypically German qualities mark him as redeemable.

As Wiesler eavesdrops, he begins to sympathize with his victims. The turning point comes when Dreyman learns that his despairing former director has killed himself. He sits down at his piano and plays a sonata the dead man had given him, touching the secret policeman’s German soul.

Von Donnersmarck’s original inspiration for his movie had been anticipated in Tom Stoppard’s 1974 play *Travesties*, which quotes Lenin saying that when he listens to Beethoven’s *Appassionata* sonata, he wants to “pat the heads of those people who while living in this vile hell can create such beauty,” but he can’t afford to indulge his love of music, however, because now is the time “to hit heads, to hit them without mercy.”

Von Donnersmarck writes, “What if Lenin could have somehow been forced to listen to the *Appassionata*, just as he was getting ready to smash in somebody’s head? ... I ‘saw’ a picture of a man in a depressing room, with earphones on his head, expecting to hear words that go against his beloved ideology, but actually hearing a music so beautiful and so powerful that it makes him re-think (or rather: re-feel).”

As the playwright moves into dangerous dissidence, Wiesler begins to shield him secretly from the Party, becoming his guardian angel—an elegant reference to the last great Berlin movie before this one, Wim Wenders’s angelic 1987 fantasy, “Wings of Desire.”

Although the tragic climax falls a bit flat, a lovely coda set in a reunited Germany provides an unexpectedly happy ending. ■

Rated R for some sexuality/nudity.

## BOOKS

[*Radicals for Capitalism: A Freewheeling History of the Modern American Libertarian Movement*, Brian Doherty, PublicAffairs, 741 pages]

# Enemies of the State

By Daniel McCarthy

THE HISTORIAN JOHN LUKACS has remarked on the peculiarity of American conservatives who “believe in Progress even more than liberals” do. Like Ronald Reagan, they subscribe—at least implicitly—to Thomas Paine’s belief that “We have it in our power to begin the world over again.” Libertarians, who trace their lineage to the free-market classical liberals of the 19th century, have for the last 30-odd years been more progressive still, hailing the advance of technologies from the Internet to cloning for their potential to make the world new and to free men from the manacles of custom and government.

That’s one kind of libertarianism, anyway—what former *Reason* editor Virginia Postrel calls “dynamism.” It was, and maybe still is, the unofficial creed of Silicon Valley, and indeed, the link between libertarianism and the wired generation is made explicit in the person of Louis Rosetto, founder of *Wired* magazine, who as a Columbia University student in 1971 brought the philosophy of open minds and open markets into the pages of the *New York Times Magazine* with a cover story announcing “The New Right Credo: Libertarianism.” (“The movement is made!” exclaimed Murray Rothbard, Mr. Libertarian himself, over that coup.) The libertarian affinity for science fiction—from Robert Heinlein and Ayn Rand to Robert Anton Wilson of the absurdist *Illuminatus!* series—further attests to the movement’s futuristic disposition.

Doherty’s book, a massive, fact-packed history of more than five decades of libertarian thought and activism, serves as a reminder that this seemingly future-oriented philosophy has a rich and fascinating past. And what’s more, the libertarians of 30 or more years ago were not always optimists; nor were they progressive even when they were forward-looking. Some, like Karl Hess, the Goldwater speechwriter turned New Left radical and libertarian guru, were gadget-geeks alright—but of a different sort. *Community Technology* was the name of one of Hess’s books, and that was his passion—rooftop urban hydroponic gardens in Adams Morgan and, later, do-it-yourself living in rural West Virginia. When Hess received no takers on an offer to trade his library of political philosophy for more practical implements, he concluded, “The collective political wisdom of the ages was not worth a good set of forged-steel hand tools.” Ralph Borsodi, the “back to the land” movement leader who inspired many libertarians, might have said the same thing.

Fundamentally, libertarianism—popular perceptions and the hobbies of its exponents notwithstanding—is not about technology or progress, one way or the other, but about freedom, specifically freedom from the State. In the American context, that idea has always had some overlap with larger agendas. Doherty skips over the libertarian qualities in the thought of such prominent figures as Jefferson and Paine—those, he suggests, have been covered by others—and instead begins his account with the peculiarly American anarchists of the latter half of the 19th century, men like Benjamin Tucker and Lysander Spooner and women like the individualist feminist Voltairine de Cleyre. These “unterrified Jeffersonians” took seriously Thoreau’s observation that if the best government is that which governs least, then “that which governs least is no government at all.” Doherty’s first chapter shows well that American libertarianism is no 20th-cen-

tury innovation—nor is it an import from Europe.

But European émigrés, three in particular, re-established American libertarianism in the mid-20th century in the aftermath of the New Deal and the rise of garrison state. In the early 1940s, the writers of the so-called Old Right were liberty’s idiosyncratic spokesmen (and women—Doherty isn’t indulging in tokenism when he highlights Isabel Paterson and Rose Wilder Lane, women who made more comprehensive arguments for liberty than their male contemporaries). But they were dying off quickly, and following the “Keynesian revolution” in economics a more systematic defense of free markets was needed. It would be supplied by two Austrians, the economists Ludwig von Mises and Friedrich von Hayek, and a Russian, the novelist Ayn Rand. While the Old Right represented a rearguard action against the welfare-warfare state, Austrian economics and Randian philosophy opened new fronts in the war against collectivism. Hayek’s *The Road to Serfdom* (1944), Rand’s novels *The Fountainhead* (1943) and *Atlas Shrugged* (1957), and the many works of Mises, most importantly *Human Action* (1949), rallied America’s disheartened antistatists at the high tide of modern liberalism.

The “Austrian” school of economics represented almost the last and certainly the most intransigent expression of *laissez-faire* in the modern world, and it is thanks largely to the Austrians that libertarianism and free-market economics are so closely linked today. Mises, born in Lemberg (now Lvov, in Ukraine) in 1881 and raised in Vienna, was de facto dean of the Austrian school, having studied under leading Austrian economist and former finance minister Eugen von Böhm-Bawerk. Hayek, though never formally Mises’ student, was nonetheless a protégé of sorts, profoundly influenced by Mises’ writings and a junior colleague of his in the Austrian Chamber of Commerce.

Both men fled Austria as the country fell into Hitler’s orbit. Hayek headed to

the London School of Economics, where he wrote a short, popular book that would galvanize America upon its publication in 1944. *The Road to Serfdom* showed how Nazi totalitarianism had arisen in stages—and how it could happen here. Mises, meanwhile, first sought refuge in Geneva then emigrated to the United States in 1940. He found his uncompromising laissez-faire views and “Austrian” methodology—which treats economics as a logical rather than an empirical science—unwelcome among American academics. Only the support of private benefactors, who established a chair for him at New York University’s business school (the economics department wouldn’t have him), secured him a permanent post. Hayek encountered similar difficulties when he left LSE for the University of Chicago in 1950: he too was denied appointment to the economics department and instead joined Chicago’s interdisciplinary Committee on Social Thought.

From these seemingly inauspicious beginnings grew not one but two or even three intellectual movements. American students and admirers of Mises such as Murray Rothbard, a Columbia University graduate student, extended the work of their mentor and converted others, so that today the Austrian tradition flourishes in the United States, with strongholds at George Mason University and the Ludwig von Mises Institute in Auburn, Alabama—though even now, warns George Mason’s Peter Boettke, “You get involved in it and you’re like in the *X-Files* of academics.”

Through Rothbard, the transplantation of the Austrian tradition to the United States also gave rise to a reinvigorated libertarian political philosophy: Rothbard rightly emerges from Doherty’s narrative as one of the giants of modern libertarianism, both for his intellectual work (books such as *Man, Economy, and State* and the libertarian primer *For a New Liberty*) and for his movement-building—Rothbard named and helped establish the Cato Institute and was at one time deeply involved in the Libertarian Party. He also published a highly influential series of newsletters and small journals and sought, at various times, to build bridges to the Old Right and the New Left.

Austrian economics was also pivotal to the development of the conservative movement, though that is a story beyond the scope of Doherty’s book. As it is, these 741 densely packed pages can barely contain the libertarian story by itself. Regrettably, Doherty has little room to investigate the conjunctions and disjunctions between libertarianism, conservatism, and liberalism. But he does show the right-wing origins of many of the early libertarians. Rothbard, for example, as a Jewish student at Columbia, horrified his peers by organizing a Students for Strom Thurmond chapter, so staunchly did he believe in states’ rights. Similarly, the businessmen who admired Mises and supported the first free-market think tank, the Foundation for Economic Education (FEE), were mostly right-of-center Chamber of Commerce types—though Doherty

reveals that the straight-laced businessmen of FEE had a spiritually adventurous side belied by their buttoned-down image. The hippies of the 1960s weren’t the first to discover New Age spirituality—or psychedelics.

That aside, libertarians are not “hippies of the Right,” as Ayn Rand, disowning her spiritual offspring, once called them. The libertarian students who followed Rothbard and Hess in the 1960s and 1970s were more like their counterparts in Students for a Democratic Society or Young Americans for Freedom than the flower children. That’s not to say there was any shortage of young men—and occasionally young women—who wanted to “live liberty” and tried to do so by adopting names like “Skye D’Aureous” and planning utopian communities or proto-survivalist retreats into the wilderness. Doherty provides wonderfully detailed accounts of these sorts of characters.

He is at his best, however, as an institutional historian showing who paid whom. Doherty details the work of the most important funding father of the libertarian movement, Kansas oil billionaire Charles Koch, who along with his brother David provided the seed money and early financing for the Cato Institute and Libertarian Party, among other projects. The Kochs have shaped the libertarian movement to a degree that is hard to overstate, though other individuals and institutions—most notably the now-defunct Volker Fund, which supported scholars like Rothbard in the 1950s and ‘60s—also played indispensable philanthropic roles.

Facts he has in abundance, but analysis is not Doherty’s strong suit. He develops only faint themes and never provides a satisfactory answer to the most basic question: Why? Why should the average reader care about this movement? Why did men like Mises and Rothbard—who was relegated to the Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute for most of his career—sacrifice so much for the cause of liberty? The latter may not be a question Doherty is inclined to ask simply because his own sympathies lie with gradualist libertarians

## MOVING?

### Changing your address?

Simply go to **The American Conservative** website, [www.amconmag.com](http://www.amconmag.com). Click “subscribe” and then click “address change.”

To access your account make sure you have your TAC mailing label. You may also subscribe or renew online.

If you prefer to mail your address change send your TAC label with your new address to:

**The American Conservative**  
Subscription Department  
P.O. Box 9030  
Maple Shade, NJ 08052-9030



who have been more willing to compromise with the mainstream, an approach that netted Nobel Prizes for both Hayek and Milton Friedman.

To Doherty, Friedman is perhaps the most heroic, and certainly the most influential, libertarian of all, a man who helped convince Nixon to end conscription and who brought libertarianism to millions through his biweekly *Newsweek* column and PBS documentary "Free to Choose." But while Rothbard and Rand were fired by a passion for natural rights, Friedman saw the case for liberty in simple utilitarian terms: freedom just works better.

There is much more to Doherty's book, too much in fact for this review to cover. The author capably limns the differences between the Austrian and Chicago schools of economics, for example. A passing remark on Rand, applying to her the Burkean idea of the "moral imagination"—that is, literature's ability to shape human ideals and character—is equal parts tantalizing and provocative. And there are dozens, even hundreds, of other threads within *Radicals for Capitalism*, all of them derived from meticulous research. Despite its flaws, this book is a stunning achievement.

*Radicals for Capitalism* shows that libertarianism is not at all a species of techno-utopianism; "dynamism" is but one facet of an astonishingly pluralistic tradition. And Doherty foresees more diversification in the future as libertarianism becomes further popularized—or further watered-down and compromised, as some might see it. It seems to me, however, that Doherty misses at least one great change already in the offing. With the failure of the grand ideological projects of the Right—from the culture war to the war in Iraq—many chastened conservatives may at last be coming around to the view that the government that governs best really is that which governs least. It used to be that a libertarian who grew up became a Republican. Now it might be the other way around. ■

*Daniel McCarthy is senior editor of ISI Books.*

[*War Made New: War, Technology, and the Course of History: 1500 to Today, Max Boot, Gotham Books, 624 pages*]

## On War It's Not

By Martin Sieff

HISTORICAL SURVEYS of war and the way technological developments change the way it is fought are common—from the tours de force of major military historians like Martin Van Creveld and William O'Neill to potboilers marketed to 12-year-old boys. In his new book, Max Boot certainly aspires to be among the former, and the enthusiastic recommendations on the book's dust jacket from no less than Sen. John McCain, Robert Kaplan, retired Lt. Gen. Bernard Trainor, and Paul Kennedy certainly add to this impression. But *War Made New* is remarkably superficial and filled with the most extraordinary lacunae. It ignores—by accident or design—the most important developments in modern military technology.

Boot follows the familiar pattern of taking supposedly pivotal battles that changed military history, describing them in a dramatic and easily accessible outline, and then briefly discussing the forces that were their deciding factors. Yet his choice of battles is very bizarre. No chapter in his book covers any major battle of World War I. The Korean War and the Vietnam War are ignored, even though the former is a classic example of a theme Boot celebrates: the superiority of militaries with advanced technology.

With such technology in Korea, the U.S. Army and Marine Corps virtually annihilated the Chinese forces that vastly outnumbered them. Vietnam was different: there, the most advanced military technology, however profusely used, could not end a politically and tactically complex guerrilla conflict. Though the latter example is quite relevant to the United States' conundrums

in Iraq, Boot attempts no significant discussion of the topic. Nor does he discuss any of the anticolonial guerrilla wars, which defined major conflicts for most of the second half of the 20th century, or the 1973 Arab-Israeli War, which demonstrated the vulnerability of close support aircraft and main battle tanks to handheld missiles fired by poorly trained conscript soldiers.

But Boot does include a stirring account—filled with simplistic martial clichés that would have made Richard Harding Davis blush—of the combination of horse cavalry and high tech that supposedly worked unprecedented wonders in 2001 to topple the Taliban in Afghanistan. The trouble is, as Boot never notes, that conquering Afghanistan is extremely easy. The British did so three times in just over 80 years. In 1979, the Red Army pulled it off 20 times faster than American and Afghan allied forces did in 2001.

There was nothing epochal or revolutionary about the way the 2001 campaign was fought. In fact, it was disastrously bungled. The squeamishness and incompetence of Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and his right-hand man, Paul Wolfowitz, meant that insufficient U.S. Special Forces were used in the Tora Bora and Anaconda operations, allowing the key command cadres of al-Qaeda to escape—a strategic development with most disastrous consequences for the long-term war on terrorism.

Boot's chapter on Iraq is even more inept, misleading, and downright wrong than the one on Afghanistan. The chapter's climax is May 1, 2003, the day President Bush declared "Mission Accomplished" aboard the *USS Abraham Lincoln*—which is like ending an account of World War II with the Nazis' conquest of France or cutting off "Hamlet" in the first act and claiming that the play had a happy ending. Since that day, of course, the unending violence in Iraq has confounded the Rumsfeld-neocon contention that super-advanced technology has indeed made war new, as Boot claims in his book.

Boot does add a half-hearted and vague discussion of some of the disastrous developments in Iraq since 2003. This is especially notable for its obfuscations clearly designed to get Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz, and Boot's other neocon friends off the hook for failing to anticipate or prevent any of the developments he mentions. Boot bends over backward

within four years of Köeniggrätz, artillery had replaced rifles as the main killer in the Franco-Prussian War. This proved to be a far more lasting and lethal development. Artillery, not rifles or machineguns, was the great killer of World War I, especially at the climactic battle of Verdun—which, again, Boot does not discuss. The same was true of World War II.

**BOOT PLUMPS FOR THE OBVIOUS AND GETS EVEN THAT WRONG. IT IS CLEAR THAT HE DOES NOT EVEN KNOW WHAT BLITZKRIEG IS.**

to argue that many senior American generals were on record agreeing with Rumsfeld that more troops in Iraq were unnecessary, so no one, as Boot sees it, can be held accountable. Boot neglects to note, however, that Rumsfeld ran the U.S. Armed Forces with more arrogance, hands-on micro-managing, and sheer bullying than any previous defense secretary in American history. Robert McNamara, justly excoriated in the Vietnam era, never came close. Compared to such excellent studies of the Bush-Rumsfeld policymakers' failure to deal with the developing guerrilla war in Iraq as Thomas Ricks's *Fiasco* or Rajiv Chandrasekaran's *Imperial Life in the Emerald City*, Boot's discussion is banal.

Throughout *War Made New*, Boot's historical examples of transformational military battles and campaigns are remarkably ill-chosen, capricious, or misunderstood. The battle of Köeniggrätz in 1866, for example, was not the first time rail power was used to achieve decisive concentration of force in war: the campaigns of Gens. Ulysses S. Grant and William Tecumseh Sherman during the American Civil War were. But neither the Civil War nor Köeniggrätz was the first example of irrepressible firepower massed in combat. In 1815, the 50,000 who died at Waterloo and the thousands of British soldiers slain for negligible loss by Gen. Andrew Jackson's numerically far inferior forces at New Orleans could attest to that.

Boot correctly notes in passing, but does not further explore, the fact that

Boot does, however, rehash the apotheosis of aircraft-carrier power at Pearl Harbor, but even this is bungled. The battle that demonstrated the potency of such power in World War II was not Pearl Harbor but Taranto a year before, when British Swordfish torpedo aircraft knocked out three Italian battleships in their heavily defended home port, thereby wiping out half of the Italian navy's main striking power in a single blow. The Japanese navy carefully studied the Taranto attack and used it as a model for its attack on Pearl Harbor, making sure to follow the British navy's placement of wooden fins on its torpedoes to help them operate in the shallow waters of Taranto Harbor. Boot briefly references the Taranto attack but does not discuss the operational lessons that Japan learned from it. Neither does he reference the vulnerability of giant nuclear-powered aircraft carriers to anti-ship missile attack, or the Russian-built N-SS-22 Moskvit—also manufactured by China as the Sunburn—which is designed to sink American super-carriers operating close to shore.

Nowhere does Boot discuss the campaigns of the German U-boats against Britain in both World Wars and that of the U.S. Navy's submarines against Japan in World War II. Yet these were vastly more strategically important than the carrier battles he celebrates. Boot also excludes the key fact that America's 12 nuclear aircraft carriers have been sitting ducks for fast-attack submarines since 1968, when a fast Soviet nuclear-

powered attack submarine matched the *USS Enterprise* at top speed in the Pacific Ocean. That moment, vividly and thoroughly discussed in Patrick Tyler's *Running Critical*, was as epochal a moment in the shift of the strategic balance at sea as Gen. Billy Mitchell's sinking of the former German battleship *Ostfriesland* in a trial attack off Hampton Roads on July 21, 1921. Boot has an excellent account of the latter event but says nothing of the humiliation of the *Enterprise*. Since 1968, U.S. submarines have routinely scored disabling hits on American carriers in U.S. Navy war games, and the hits, Navy insiders know, are routinely unacknowledged in the official assessments of the maneuvers.

In his discussion of Germany's blitzkrieg war that brought down France in 1940, Boot plumps for the obvious and gets even that wrong. It is clear that he does not even know what blitzkrieg is. He refers to the successful penetration tactics of the German army on the Western Front in March 1918, but only in passing. He is right to emphasize the importance of good radio communications—as he says, Gen. Heinz Guderian's experience as a combat communications officer was of great value in this regard—and the importance of close tactical air support. But he does not grasp that the success of blitzkrieg did not depend on the massed use of tanks but on their co-ordination with German attacking infantry and air power simultaneously. The German army's emphasis on leaving tactics to small unit front line officers and the importance of using infantry to clear the way for tanks is nowhere mentioned.

Boot recognizes that France had better tanks than Germany in the campaign of 1940. (It also had lots more of them.) And he recognizes the long-established point that the key reason the French army lost in 1940 is that its ponderous command structure was still mired in the worst aspects of World War I. But he never refers once to the late U.S. Air Force Col. John Boyd, the greatest of all American military strategists and certainly the most influential and important of any strategist in the world over the

past half century. He doesn't mention Boyd's Observation-Oriented-Decision-Action (OODA) loop concept, despite its being essential to any successful understanding of the blitzkrieg operation. Nor does he mention, or appear to understand the difference, between a highly centralized second-generation army, like the French army in 1940 or the U.S. Army today, and a fast-reacting, decentralized third-generation army, like the German army in 1940. He also appears not to realize that in the course of the war, Hitler systematically stripped the *Wehrmacht* of its front-line initiative and tactical flexibility—its greatest strengths—and imposed a slow-reacting, ponderous, centralized decision-making structure focused on his person.

Despite being replete with key issues of the impact of technology on war and the lessons to be learned from it, most of them highly relevant today, Boot neglects to refer in any detail to the Russo-

strategic air power—of war made new—he uses Gen. Curtis Le May's campaign with the USAAF's XX Bomber Command that burned down Japanese cities in the spring of 1945. But this was shooting fish in a barrel. Japan had neither sufficient technological resources nor the industrial base to create any effective air defense system. Once Le May worked out the tactics of sending in his B-29 Superfortresses flying low and filled to the brim with light incendiary devices, the outcome was inevitable.

In his brief discussion of the Battle of Britain, Boot pays tribute to the pioneering integrated fighter defense system put together by Air Chief Marshal Hugh Dowding of the Royal Air Force. But he does not acknowledge the crucial role that low-tech human spotters, many of them teenagers or retirees, played in supplementing the experimental radar system and giving rapid and accurate observation informa-

cussion of net-centric war but absolutely nothing about the horrendous problems that the U.S. Army has experienced in trying to integrate its thousands of ad hoc-assembled systems into a new, supposedly fast-moving, and perfectly reliable one. Nor is there any discussion of all net-centric systems' inherent vulnerability to every kind of dislocation, or of the immense resources China in particular is devoting to asymmetrical warfare programs designed to paralyze American high-tech command and communications systems. The significance of electro-magnetic pulse, or EMP, a byproduct of any nuclear explosion in the atmosphere that can disable electrical systems for hundreds if not thousands of miles around it, is nowhere mentioned, even though the high-tech wonder systems Boot celebrates can be reduced to nothing by it in an instant. And Boot fails to refer even once to the concept of Fourth Generation war, its challenge to the integrity of the nation-state, or William S. Lind's prolific and valuable writings on it.

*War Made New* is significant in that it appears to represent an attempt by a prominent neoconservative to reclaim his and his friends' reputations for expertise on modern war that were so damaged by their repeated and documented incompetence in crafting U.S. policy and dominating public discourse on the Iraq War—not to mention the unfolding fiasco in Afghanistan. The enthusiastic recommendation of Sen. McCain, an acknowledged war hero and the clear Republican frontrunner for the 2008 presidential nomination, confirms that this bogus rehabilitation remains a very real possibility. The book is therefore of significance as a political and propaganda ploy. But as serious military history or any kind of useful guide to U.S. policymaking, it is simply farcical. ■

---

*Martin Sieff is national security correspondent for United Press International. He has reported from more than 60 countries, covered seven guerrilla wars and ethnic conflicts and been nominated three times for the Pulitzer Prize for international reporting.*

THIS REPRESENTS AN ATTEMPT BY A **PROMINENT NEOCONSERVATIVE** TO RECLAIM HIS AND HIS FRIENDS' REPUTATIONS FOR **EXPERTISE ON MODERN WAR** THAT WERE SO **DAMAGED BY THEIR INCOMPETENCE** IN CRAFTING U.S. POLICY

German War of 1941-45, the largest and bloodiest war in history. He wrongly claims that Stalingrad was the war's turning point in the east; serious military historians and analysts almost all concur that the great frontal clash at Kursk in July 1943 was far more pivotal. And he fails to discuss the impact on the war of simple, easily mass-produced but militarily effective weapons, such as the T-34 tank, the Ilyushin Il-2 Stormovik tactical ground support aircraft, or the BM-13 Katyusha multiple rocket mortar that proved so important at Stalingrad and Kursk. (Updated versions of the Katyusha gave the Israeli army a nasty surprise as recently as last July when Hezbollah bombarded northern Israel with thousands of them.)

Furthermore, Boot is misleading in his chapter on modern air-war. As his example of the transforming efficacy of

tion about the number of aircraft, location, and altitude of *Luftwaffe* attacks. He wrongly credits RAF Bomber Command with eliminating half of Germany's industrial potential by 1945. In fact, through 1943 and 1944, when the British and U.S. Eighth Army Air Force attacks on German industry were at their height, Germany's industrial production under the direction of Albert Speer soared to record levels.

Boot's discussion of the future of war and technology at the end of his book is even emptier and more vapid than what comes before. If accuracy in book titles were required, this work would have been called not *War Made New* but *Clichés Made Old*. Predictably, Boot sings the praises of DARPA, the Pentagon's Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency so beloved of Rumsfeld and neocon romantics. There is a brief dis-

[*Overblown: How Politicians and the Terrorism Industry Inflate National Security Threats, and Why We Believe Them, John Mueller, Free Press, 272 pages*]

## Should We Fear Terrorism or Fear Itself?

By Wayne Merry

IF, AS FRANTZ FANON SAID, “the aim of terrorism is to terrify,” why is life in America during the global war on terrorism so normal? Even in Washington, where tangible aspects of GWOT are omnipresent, daily life lacks angst. I write only a mile from the Pentagon, but D.C. is booming with residential and commercial construction, while owners of older buildings see the planned departure of Defense Department offices for “security reasons” as an opportunity to attract better quality tenants. National Airport—outside my window—was shut down after 9/11, but today’s operations are unimpeded other than the blessed banning of noisy private executive jets—again, for security reasons. Is America at war? In Iraq and Afghanistan, certainly, and we know it. Against “global terrorism”? The administration thinks so but not the country.

John Mueller of Ohio State University attempts to sort out the contradictions of terrorism and our responses in a gutsy new book—gutsy because he risks ridicule or worse if another major attack occurs; gutsy because many of his sentences invite quotation out of context to show that the author is naïve, complacent, out of touch, or just plain liberal; gutsy also because most readers will recognize in these pages some of their own thoughts that they would never express in public.

My own reaction to *Overblown* is a desire to expand some of its sections. Mueller blasts the “terrorism industry” for immense and often frivolous waste

in the pursuit of homeland security, but he could illustrate more. For example, here in the nation’s capital, more than a billion dollars has already been spent turning Congress into a fortress guaranteed to alienate citizens from their elected representatives, but recently, a mentally disturbed man drove without difficulty into the Capitol’s controlled zone and spent several hours within the Capitol Building itself before authorities could locate him. This is your tax dollars at work. As a former diplomat, I can only decry the vast sums spent constructing embassy bunkers while draining funds from the real business of American diplomacy, which is to engage people in foreign societies.

Half of Mueller’s book is devoted to the historical experience of previous threats to America’s security, such as Pearl Harbor and the Cold War. Unfortunately, Mueller does not compare America’s historical experience in this regard to the experiences of other countries like Italy, Turkey, and Britain that have learned hard lessons about terrorism. I personally witnessed two contrasting examples.

The German Red Army Faction was small in numbers but tied the country in knots, making many Germans doubt the efficacy of their national institutions. The success of the Bonn government in dealing with the challenge was a true watershed in the maturation of democratic politics and the rule of law in modern Germany and, hence it was ultimately a positive experience. At the opposite pole, the complacency of the Greek public and political elites in responding to November 17, a Greek terrorist organization, demonstrated the dangers of under-reaction to violent extremism in a law-based state.

Some of the historical cases cited by Mueller carry more lessons than he mentions. For example, Pearl Harbor demonstrated the key distinction between strategic and tactical surprise. The U.S. knew that Japan’s initiation of war was impending, as it later knew that al-Qaeda’s series of attacks would culminate in another effort on American soil.

In both cases, officials failed to appreciate the talents and resolve of our adversaries. Cultural condescension—even racism—played a key role in both failures. On the day of Pearl Harbor, senior officials in Washington suspected German involvement, as they could not believe mere Asians were capable of such boldness and operational skill. (The Imperial Japanese Navy’s abilities in fact dwarfed those of its German counterpart.) American attitudes toward al-Qaeda have similarly been tinged with racial and religious prejudice, leading to the conclusion that the attackers must be fanatics and cowards.

Pearl Harbor was not even the worst American intelligence failure of the Pacific war; the kamikaze campaign was. Despite America’s decades-long study of the Japanese military and three years of actual war, the kamikaze’s scale and organization caught U.S. forces by surprise at a cost in blood far greater than Pearl Harbor. Is Washington likewise viewing al-Qaeda and its affiliates within convenient Western conceptual categories and perhaps misreading their ability to fashion new and imaginative forms of asymmetric warfare? I hope not.

Similarly, I would add to Mueller’s analysis of America’s overreaction to the Soviet threat the caution that our misperceptions of the Soviets were not even half as dangerous as the Soviets’ misperceptions of us. In my years as a political analyst at the American Embassy in Moscow, I worried often that Washington did not understand Russia but even more so that Moscow could not begin to understand America. A similar imbalance may be true today. Even the most hackneyed Washington mindset may not be so out of touch with reality as the virtue-seeking aspirations of our enemies. It may take two to tango, but one party only is required to foment a tragedy. Threat inflation is a common response to intelligence failure by officialdom, but I think more was at work after 9/11. Until that day, the neoconservatives—radicals, not conservatives at all—were actively seeking a credible



external enemy to replace the defunct Soviet Union. The candidate of choice was China, which fulfilled all the requisite qualities of cultural, ideological, and racial otherness. Perhaps Osama bin Laden seized the standard of the clash of civilizations just in time to avoid a collision between this country and China over an entirely manageable controversy like Taiwan and diverted our energies from East to Southwest Asia. This need for an enemy of stature to justify the security state—national security during the Cold War, homeland security during the GWOT—exists independent of terrorism.

**AMERICANS WERE SHOCKED AND OUTRAGED, AND THEY WANTED ACTION. THEY DID NOT DEMAND A GLOBAL WAR. BUSH COULD HAVE DEFINED THE CHALLENGE MUCH MORE NARROWLY AND ACHIEVED TRUE VICTORY OVER OUR ATTACKERS.**

Fairness requires that responsibility be shared by a bipartisan Congress, which foisted a full-bore Department of Homeland Security and a deadening reorganization of the intelligence community on an unwilling White House. Both moves assure bureaucratic inertia for years to come. Don't believe it? Look at the government structures created for the War on Poverty, the War on Cancer, and the War(s) on Drugs.

Where to start in rolling back? I propose chiseling over the entrance of every homeland security office in the country Friedrich the Great's axiom that an effort to defend everywhere results in defending nowhere. In other words, we need to start with some sensible priorities rather than, as Mueller notes, defining the Weeki Wachee Springs water park in Florida as a potential target in need of counterterrorist security upgrades. Don't expect a change of administration to solve things. Recall Bill Clinton's responses to Waco and to the bombing of embassies in Africa. The neoliberals can be just as condescending to foreign societies and cultures as the neoconservatives. God help us.

We also need to accept that the mentality of al-Qaeda is not limited to non-Western cultures. Remember Jonestown? We produce homegrown terrorists and the soil in which they breed. Two of the largest terrorist bombings in our history emanated from Middle America: Madison, Wisconsin in 1970 and Oklahoma City in 1995. The former was the work of sociopaths using leftist politics as self-justification, while the latter resulted from a similar mindset on the Right.

Any rational approach to terrorism must begin with the recognition that violence is a tool of politics for everyone, not just for "sovereign" states and great

powers. What we call terrorism is usually the resort of the powerless and is often justified as freedom fighting. We proclaim that we will have no truck with terrorists, but we do—if they are Irish, Israeli, corrupt Palestinian, anti-Serb Kosovar, anti-Soviet Afghan. Almost every group employing terrorist methods does so in pursuit of what it considers a programmatic goal. Some of these goals eventually pass muster in the broader political world, which is why Gerry Adams and Yassir Arafat could walk red carpets in Washington. Some programs are so extreme as to fail the most basic standards of acceptance, which is why our post-9/11 campaign in Afghanistan was justified, as was the German government's destruction of the Red Army Faction and the eventual, but partial, Greek prosecution of the November 17 terrorists.

All politics is about choices. A great power like the United States does not always have the luxury of choosing its enemies; they generally choose us. Nonetheless, we can choose our responses and our priorities. The extraordinary thing about the American public response to Sept. 11 was its mod-

eration. There were a few isolated acts of violence against perceived Muslims, but very few. Compare these with the Germanophobia of 1917-18, the Red Scare of the 1920s, the racial hatred of Japanese people after Pearl Harbor, and the McCarthy hysteria. Americans were shocked and outraged, and they wanted action. They did not demand a war, much less a global war. President Bush could have defined the challenge much more narrowly and achieved true victory over our attackers. The country would have rightly thanked him for it. The American public did not aspire to an end to evil, or a reformed Islamic world, or an open-ended occupation of Iraq.

*Overblown* is a welcome essay in the uphill battle of restoring balance and reasonable priorities to U.S. policy. John Mueller thereby exposes himself to opprobrium and vilification. Good luck to him. My advice, as he pursues this thankless task, is to take great care not to fall into the trap of overstating his case. Much of America's response to 9/11 is worthy of criticism and even ridicule, but the dangers are real. Mueller cites the parable of "The Boy Who Cried Wolf," but in the story, there actually is a wolf, and it ultimately eats the boy.

The boy was his own worst enemy. Are we? The painful irony of the global war on terrorism is that many of our responses have been force multipliers for our enemies, making their objectives more salient than they ever would have been without assistance from the American superpower. Pogo was right. ■

---

*Wayne Merry is a former State Department and Pentagon official and a member of the Coalition for a Realistic Foreign Policy.*

**Tell your friends about  
*The American Conservative* ...**

**the magazine for  
thinking conservatives.**

[www.amconmag.com](http://www.amconmag.com)

## Missing Any Issues of The American Conservative?

**Order today, and get a FREE copy of the first issue!**

\$6 per issue postage paid.

Please indicate quantity:

**October 7, 2002**

**FREE** Vol. 1, No. 1

First Issue!

FREE with any paid order

**December 2, 2002**

\_\_\_ Norman Mailer on Empire

**March 24, 2003**

\_\_\_ Whose War?

**February 2, 2004**

\_\_\_ Cheney Builds an Empire

**March 15, 2004**

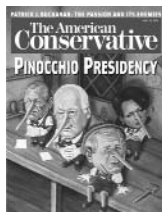
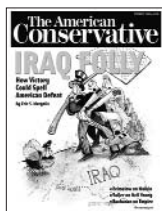
\_\_\_ Gibson's Passion

**April 26, 2004**

\_\_\_ Pinocchio Presidency

**July 5, 2004**

\_\_\_ Reagan Commemorative Issue



See "Archive" at [www.amconmag.com](http://www.amconmag.com) for a description of all issues

\_\_\_ Other issue. Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ Other issue. Date \_\_\_\_\_

☐ **5 issues published in 2002**

☐ **All 24 issues published in 2003**

☐ **All 24 issues published in 2004**

**FREE** Vol. 1, No. 1 with paid order

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Please print

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_

TAC70312

Send your order with payment to:

**The American Conservative**  
1300 Wilson Blvd., Suite 120  
Arlington, VA 22209

## Forum

*Continued from Page 2*

Responses to previous questions clearly pointed to the 1950s as most people's preferred reference point.

Faust, it seems, has taken a tumble. In the face of an accelerating downward spiral of many aspects of American life—especially morals, manners, and culture—which began in the 1960s, American expectations of the future are not what they were. It is no longer clear that a majority of Americans are future-focused. The political potential of a call to return to past ways of living is sufficient at least to warrant exploration.

Of course, neither the survey's respondents nor the authors would seek to return to the 1950s in everything. No one is suggesting that we stop administering polio vaccine and bring back the little iron lungs.

### Enrich, Not Replicate

Attempts to recover the past—and there have been many throughout history—never reproduce the past exactly. But some have succeeded in using the past to shape the future. The Renaissance and the Reformation are two examples. The Renaissance did not reproduce ancient Rome or Greece in late-Medieval Italy. But by drawing on the classical past, the Renaissance did enrich Italy, and Europe, in previously unimaginable ways. Similarly, the Reformation did not succeed in recreating the Early Church. (As a Greek Catholic and an Anglo-Catholic, respectively, we would argue that the Reformation moved away from it.) But the resulting Protestant ethic played an enormous role in the world-wide triumph of the West.

We believe that the theme of retroculture can and should similarly shape the next conservatism, without either an expectation or an intention of recreating 1950s America in every detail. If the next conservatism is to succeed, it must offer the public some vision of the future. A politics that is visionless can neither

instruct nor inspire. It quickly degenerates into little more than backroom deals for personal advantage.

False, utopian visions, a staple of ideologies, run another risk. Such abstracts are by definition unattainable, yet they justify every means employable for their attainment. The 20th century lies littered with their bloody ruins.

The middle-class America of the 1950s, in contrast, is not an abstract. It was real. It is attainable because it was attained. It is not the stuff of utopian dreams because it is knowable, indeed it is remembered by many still alive. We know such an America can work because it did work. What worked once, can work again—just like streetcars.

### Unabashed Geezers

So we cheerfully accept the risk of being labeled geezer conservatives. When we are asked, "Just what is it that you guys, as conservatives, want?" our answer will be, "An America pretty much like the one we had in the 1950s." That may turn off the elites, but our survey gives us reason to think it will resonate with many ordinary Americans. Even if they are too young to remember the '50s themselves, they have a mental image of that time, and it is a favorable image. It is also a valid image; we know because we were there.

If others, conservative or not, wish to offer as their vision of the future a Brave New World-Lite, or a Brave New World If You Choose It (the libertarian brand), or a Brave New World real cheap from Wal-Mart, that is up to them. We think retroculture is a better option. We also think, thanks not to Wal-Mart but to Lawrence Research, that it will sell.

PAUL M. WEYRICH and

WILLIAM S. LIND

Washington, D.C.

*The American Conservative* welcomes letters to the editor. Submit by e-mail to [letters@amconmag.com](mailto:letters@amconmag.com), by fax to 703-875-3350, or by mail to 1300 Wilson Blvd., Suite 120, Arlington, VA 22209. Please include your name, address, and phone number. We reserve the right to edit all correspondence for space and clarity.

# 15 Minutes—20 Years Later



He died 20 years ago this month, and I went to his funeral as stoned as most of his entourage. Bianca Jagger made a ridiculously theatrical

entrance. So did Cornelia Guest, the deb of the decade as the tabloids had dubbed her, who burst into tears as soon as she approached the waiting cameras. Everyone who was anyone among the freaks and groupies of the period attended.

The service was in St. Patrick's Cathedral on Fifth Avenue, and many of us had stayed up through the night drinking and smoking exotic cheroots. Andy Warhol was hardly a friend, and I only got wrecked because some awfully cute young groupies were upset at his sudden death. I thought I'd stick around to give them moral support. The party following the service was a real gas, to use long ago parlance. The freaks were openly injecting drugs or taking cocaine, others got sick all over the floor, and some gays were feeling each other up for the rest of us to admire. In other words, it was a typical Warhol party. Too bad he wasn't around to enjoy it.

Andy Warhol was a unique American phenomenon. When his infamous diaries came out—the first bestseller purposely had no index so that fame groupies could not read about themselves in the bookstore and not buy the opus—I was surprised to find myself mentioned almost as many times as some minor celebrities. Warhol knew more about what was going on in nightclubs than any of us because he didn't drink or take drugs. He also did not look for sex; it was simply always on his mind. He sat for hours at a time in Studio 54 and simply observed, engaging in absolutely no conversation except for "Gee!" and "Wow!"

When I was featured in his *Interview* magazine—the piece, entitled "A terrorist among the rich," was accompanied by a Bruce Weber portrait that made me look like a film star—he threw a dinner for me at the trendy Nicolas restaurant in New York's Upper East Side. I sat next to him for sometime without exchanging words. Out of the blue he told me that I should sleep with actress Elizabeth Ashley, someone I had never met. "She really digs you, she's always calling me asking about you," he whispered conspiratorially.

Now I am not the naïve type, but I fell for it. When I asked my friend Bob Colacello, who worked for Andy's magazine, I got the bad news. "Andy likes to get people involved," said Bob. "Apparently Elizabeth is angry about your conservative politics..." It was vintage Andy.

Twenty years later, he has never been bigger. Filmmaker Ric Burns has done a two-part documentary about him, a giant book of his art has just been published by Phaidon, and "Factory Girl," a major motion picture about doomed Warhol "star" Edie Sedgwick, has just been released.

Gee whiz, as Andy would say, who would have guessed it? I always thought his art was a rubbishy gimmick, but time has proved me wrong, as far as commercial value is concerned.

One afternoon, Andy's minion Fred Hughes invited me to dinner with Bianca Jagger and artist Cy Twombly at "the world's most expensive restaurant," as Fred put it. At the time, I was keen on young Barbara Allen, who was

also going, so I agreed. Andy never touched his food, sipped some mineral water, and never opened his mouth. I got totally wasted and paid the bill when I realized that no one else was going to make a move. Warhol thought it hilarious.

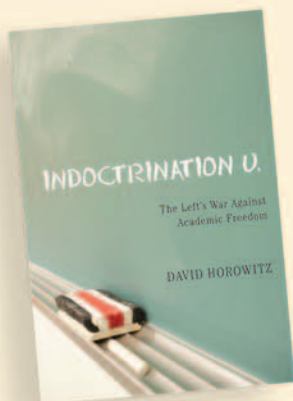
Somehow he managed to write in his diaries exactly what followed. Barbara locked me out of her apartment, and when I broke down the door thinking she was inside with another man, I found her fast asleep, having taken a Quaalude that could have numbed the Minotaur. Andy's diary made it seem much funnier than it was. Both Barbara and I swear to this day we never talked to him about it.

Andy was an idiot-savant. Money was all he cared for, and it came to him effortlessly while he courted celebrities and the rich. He was cold and ruthless yet gave the impression of great vulnerability. He was the great enabler, the impotent celebrity who made it on sex appeal (or sex repeal, as I called it). He played the primitive in a sophisticated age, and he did not have to try hard at the role. Andy was quite primitive to begin with.

His 1976 interview of another tiny terror, Truman Capote—a man who hated the truth more than Bill Clinton—made Warhol's magazine, a publication on whose masthead I was proud to be the only heterosexual. Fred Hughes, the magazine's president, and Bob Colacello, its star writer, had a lot of laughs about that.

I hated the freaks and the druggies, but looking back, Andy was an original—however phony his originality. His fame will grow exponentially as we become more and more Warholesque in our admiration of the cheap and the glitzy. ■





## INDOCTRINATION U.

By David Horowitz | ISBN: 978-1-59403-190-8 | \$21.95

In 2003, Horowitz began a campaign to promote intellectual diversity in American universities. He devised an "Academic Bill of Rights" and launched a national student movement on 160 campuses, promoting student-specific academic freedoms. In this book, Horowitz unveils the intellectual corruption of faculty activists who have turned classrooms into political platforms, with little regard for professional standards.

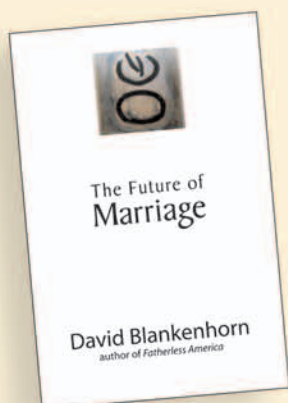
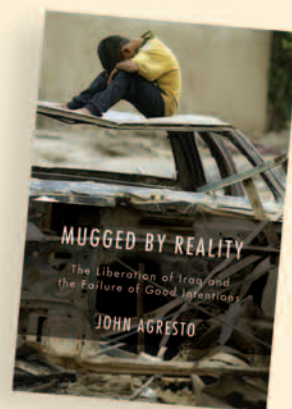
*Indoctrination U.* also offers a riveting account of the reaction by professor unions under leadership of the political left. This is the story of the battle against academic freedom; it can also be read as a case study of the politics of the radical left.

## MUGGED BY REALITY

*THE LIBERATION OF IRAQ AND THE FAILURE OF GOOD INTENTIONS*

by John Agresto | ISBN: 978-1-594031-87-8 | \$25.95

John Agresto spent a little over nine months in Iraq. His job was to help Iraq rebuild its once highly regarded education system. As he left Iraq, Agresto was asked by the Pentagon to write a few paragraphs for the future about this formative and transitional time; from those paragraphs *Mugged by Reality* was born.



## THE FUTURE OF MARRIAGE

by David Blankenhorn | ISBN: 978-1-594030-81-9 | \$25.95

In the current demands of various organizations, Blankenhorn points out, gay and lesbian leaders are not asking for marriage with the adjective "gay" in front of it, but marriage itself. So in that sense, what marriage is and why it matters are ultimately what this debate about the future of marriage is all about. David Blankenhorn answers the 'whats' and the 'whys' of our most important—and troubled—social institution.

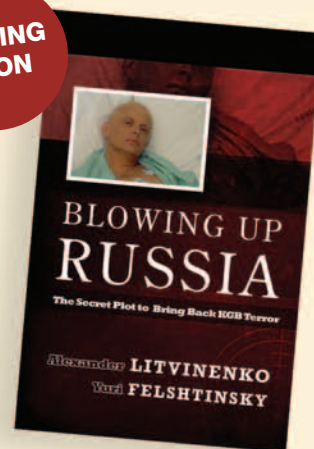
## BLOWING UP RUSSIA

*THE SECRET PLOT TO BRING BACK KGB TERROR*

by Alexander Litvinenko and Yuri Feltshinsky

ISBN: 978-1-594032-01-1 | \$25.95

Major breaking news in the US just months ago, *Blowing Up Russia* uncovers the truths behind the successful plot to assassinate Alexander Litvinenko. Unlike the other books coming out about this hot news story, this one was written by the deceased and has unprecedented insider material that other books will lack. Yuri Feltshinsky is the author of several books on Russia and was one of the last people to speak to Litvinenko before the latter succumbed to radioactive poisoning.



ENCOUNTER BOOKS [www.encounterbooks.com](http://www.encounterbooks.com)

At bookstores everywhere or call 800-786-3839